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SAINT JAMES'S:

OR

THE COURT OF QUEEN ANNE.

An Historical Romance.

BY

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WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

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SAINT JAMES'S:

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Book the Second

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER VIII.

FURNISHES FRESH PROOFS OF MR. HARLEY'S TALENT FOR INTRIGUE.

SOME days after this interview, a second drawing-room was held at Saint James's, and was followed, as the first had been, by a grand ball in the evening.

So far from diminishing the numbers of those accustomed to attend on such occasions, the threatened invasion, which seemed to call for a demonstration of loyalty and devotion, materially increased them. The

drawing-room was crowded; and the ball, to which the invitations, at the duchess's suggestion, had been very extensive, was equally numerously attended.

The honours of the evening were divided by the queen and the duchess; and it would be difficult to say which of the two claimed the greater share of attention. Whatever mortification Anne felt, she took care to conceal it, and appeared in better spirits than usual; but the duchess put no such constraint upon herself, and made it evident how much she was elated by the homage she received. Her deportment had more than its accustomed loftiness and majesty; her brow was clothed with more than its ordinary pride; and as she leaned upon the arm of her illustrious lord, and conversed with the noblest and proudest of the realm, who pressed around her, as well as with

the more distinguished representatives of foreign powers, she might well have been mistaken for the sovereign mistress of the assemblage.

Much of this homage, though appropriated by the duchess, was paid to her lord. By all, except those arrayed against the duke by faction, he was regarded with admiration, affection, and gratitude, the general feeling being, that if the country was saved from the outbreak of a rebellion, it would be mainly owing to his judgment and foresight.

Amongst others of the duchess's opponents who were present, was Harley, and though bitterly mortified at the unmistakable evidence he witnessed of her unbounded popularity and influence, he took care that her assumption of almost royal state should not pass unnoticed by the queen.

"An invasion seems scarcely necessary to wrest your majesty's crown from you," he observed, in a malicious whisper, "for the duchess appears already to have usurped the sovereignty. See how she keeps the ambassadors around her, and confers with them as if discussing the affairs of her own government."

"I perceive it all, Mr. Harley," replied Anne, quietly, "but it gives me no concern. She is intoxicated with vanity, and discerns not the danger she provokes. This night will be remembered both by herself and others, as that on which her fancied power had reached its climax. Henceforth, it will decline."

"Since your majesty gives me this assurance, I am well content," replied Harley; "but I should like to see her hurled from her pinnacle of pride."

"All in good time," said the queen, with a significant smile.

"Your majesty will forgive my hinting," rejoined Harley, "that the way in which you could wound her most sensibly at this moment, would be to announce to her that you have given your consent to Masham's union with Abigail."

"Oh! apropos of that!" cried Anne. "You heard her declare she would forbid the marriage."

"An idle threat!" exclaimed Harley, derisively. "Your majesty does not attach importance to such a piece of vapouring?"

"There is something in it, I am persuaded," replied Anne. "However, I will try what effect the announcement will have upon her."

"You will deal a harder blow than you calculate upon," said Harley, joyfully.

"All her vain-glorious fancies will be put to flight at once. But, with your majesty's permission, I will ask a question or two of Abigail."

And as he mingled with the crowd, the queen commanded an usher to bid the Duchess of Marlborough attend her.

While this was passing, Abigail and Masham were engaged in the dance, and formed the chief object of attraction to the lookers on; for the story of the young equerry's disguises having been buzzed abroad, he had become quite a hero in the eyes of the fairer portion of the assemblage.

As Harley approached the group around the dancers, he perceived the Marquis de Guiscard, watching the graceful movements of his rival with a jealous and vindictive gaze; but not wishing to be troubled with him, he moved in another direction, and

stood apart till the dance was over. He then approached Abigail, and claiming her for a moment from her lover, led her into an ante-room.

"Cousin," he said, "I have excellent news for you. The queen, at my request, has consented to your immediate union with Masham."

Abigail uttered an exclamation of delight.

"There is only one obstacle now in the way, that I can foresee," he pursued—"and it may arise from our mutual enemy, the duchess. You recollect she threatened to forbid the union. On what pretence can she do so?"

"Alas!" exclaimed Abigail, turning pale, and sinking into a chair—"I ought to have told you this before."

"Told me what?" exclaimed Harley.

"You alarm me. The mischief is not irreparable?"

"I know not," she answered, in a desponding tone; "but you shall judge. When I was introduced by the duchess into the queen's establishment, she required from me a written obligation to consider her in the light of a parent—my own mother, as you know, being dead—together with a full assent to her bestowal of my hand in marriage."

"And you signed such a paper?" cried Harley, in dismay.

"I did," she replied.

"Imprudent!" he exclaimed, striking his forehead. "Then the duchess is indeed mistress of your destiny, and our last and fairest scheme is crushed in the bud."

"Oh, do not say so!" she cried. "I knew not what I was about. The duchess

will not enforce fulfilment of the promise, — and if she does, I am not bound by it."

"Be not deceived," replied Harley; "the duchess *will* exact compliance from you; and though you certainly are not bound by the engagement, I know the queen too well not to be sure that she will respect it. If you had told me this before, it might have been guarded against."

"I feel I have been to blame," said Abigail, despairingly. "But it is not too late to remedy the mistake now?"

"I fear it is," rejoined Harley; "nevertheless, the attempt shall be made. The duchess is evidently reserving this blow to the last, and if it can be warded off, nothing more is to be apprehended."

"Accomplish that," cried Abigail, earnestly, "and I swear to you that no efforts

shall be wanting on my part to help you to the highest point of your ambition."

"I will do my best," replied Harley, "but unless the document could be abstracted—or—ha!—a plan occurs to me——"

"What is it?" she asked.

"Nay, this is my secret," he replied. "Not a word on the subject to the queen or Masham. Trust me, we will be prepared to meet the danger when it comes."

So saying, he reconducted her to the ball-room, and consigned her to her lover.

A moment after this, as Harley was making his way towards the queen, he perceived the duchess quitting the presence with looks which, in spite of the mask put upon them, plainly bespoke the receipt of disagreeable intelligence.

Satisfied that the queen had made good her words, Harley determined to watch his

opponent's movements, and finding that in place of returning to the duke and the brilliant circle around him, she shaped her course toward the green cabinet, as if for the purpose of seeking a moment's repose, he followed her, but at such a distance as not to attract her attention, and, stationing himself near the door, waited to see what would ensue.

He was not long kept in suspense. An usher passed him, and presently returned, accompanied by the Marquis de Guiscard. Seeing this, Harley moved away until the marquis had entered the cabinet. He then stepped forward, and approaching the door, which was left ajar, leaned against the side in such a posture that he could hear what passed in the room, while, to the lookers-on, he appeared solely occupied by the gay scene before him.

The first words that reached his ears were uttered rapidly, and in the voice of the duchess.

"I know you are willing to take a short cut to fortune, marquis," she said, "and I will point it out to you. Notwithstanding the opposition from various quarters—notwithstanding the refusal of the girl herself—notwithstanding the queen's consent within this moment accorded to Masham for an union with her,—you shall still wed Abigail Hill."

"I would hazard everything, as your grace knows, to carry the point," replied the marquis; "but I have, for some time, abandoned it as hopeless; and I see not how my chance is improved by what your grace now tells me."

"Hear me, marquis," rejoined the duchess. "When Abigail entered the

queen's service, she resigned the absolute disposal of her hand to me, and subscribed a document to that effect, which I now hold. She stands, therefore, in the position of my ward, and I can bestow her upon whomsoever I please. I offer her to you."

"And I need not say with what eagerness I accept the offer," replied Guiscard. "When does your grace propose to assert your authority?"

"Not till the day of her intended union with Masham," she replied.

"But a secret marriage may take place, of which your grace may be kept in ignorance," said the marquis.

"I am not afraid of that," replied the duchess, significantly. "Will you place yourself in my hands?"

"Entirely," replied the marquis.

"Enough," she rejoined. "I shall now

return to the ball-room. Nay, do not attend me, for I would not have us seen together."

So saying, she quitted the cabinet, and just as Guiscard was about to follow her, he was surprised by the sudden entrance of Harley.

"A word with you, marquis," said the latter.

"As many as you please, Mr. Harley," replied Guiscard, bowing.

"To come to the point at once," rejoined Harley. "I have overheard all that has just passed between you and the duchess."

"Then you will have learnt that I can still flatter myself with the hope of becoming your connexion by marriage," said Guiscard, with unshaken effrontery.

"A little cool reflection must convince you of the utter impossibility of the scheme

being accomplished," said Harley. "Besides, the duchess has offered you no reward——"

"Pardon me, Mr. Harley," interrupted Guiscard, "she has offered me the highest reward in promising me Abigail. I defy you to outbid her. But I am a reasonable man, and always willing to be convinced. What do you offer?"

"Freedom from arrest," replied the other. "I have nothing to do, on leaving this chamber, but to go to the Duke of Marlborough, and inform him that you engaged two of your servants to waylay a serjeant whom he had entrusted with important despatches—I have nothing, I say, but to disclose this—and prove it, as I can do—and you will see that we are not likely to be embarrassed by your presence at the wedding."

"The charge is false!" cried Guiscard, turning very pale.

"Nay, marquis," replied Harley, "it is useless to brave it out with me. I can produce the men at once. But I would rather hush up the affair than reveal it."

"What do you require, sir?" demanded Guiscard.

"Ay, now you are indeed becoming reasonable. I would have you keep on terms with the duchess—acquiesce entirely in her scheme—and when all is arranged, take your final instructions from me. Do this, and you shall not find me ungrateful."

"I shall, indeed, be happy to serve you, if possible, Mr. Harley," said Guiscard.

"We understand each other, marquis," replied the other, drily. "When I purchased the stolen letters from you, you read me a lesson which I shall not speedily forget."

"Ay, and poor Greg's mouth has been stopped by a halter, or I might read you another," muttered Guiscard. "You must undertake to ensure me against the duchess's enmity, Mr. Harley," he added aloud.

"So far as I am able—certainly," he replied. "But I can more confidently assure you of Abigail's gratitude, and you will find that more than counterbalance her grace's hostility. No further double-dealing, marquis!"

"Nay, I do not merit the reproach, Mr. Harley," said Guiscard. "You yourself make me a traitor now."

"Why, faith, that's true," returned Harley; "and as it is clearly your interest to be faithful to me, I think I may venture to trust you."

So saying he quitted the cabinet.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHAT WAY MRS. PLUMPTON AND MRS. TIPPING CONDUCTED THEMSELVES DURING THE SERJEANT'S ABSENCE.

ONE day, about a week after the serjeant's departure, Proddy took it into his head to call on Bimbelot, when, to his surprise, his appeal to the knocker was answered by a valet with whom he had no acquaintance, who informed him that his friend was within, but very unwell, and unable to attend to his duties. Proddy, expressing much concern

at this intelligence, and a strong desire to see him, was shewn into a small room near the kitchen, where he found Bimbelot looking very pale indeed, with his left arm in a sling, while beside him sat Sauvageon, whose head was bound up as if he had received a wound in that region. Both seemed considerably surprised and disturbed at the sight of the coachman.

"Heyday!" exclaimed Proddy, staring at them—"what's the matter? Been fighting another duel, eh?"

"Non, non, mon cher cocher," replied Bimbelot, "we have been wounded as you see by de Mohogs. Ah! terrible fellows dem Mohogs."

"So I've heard," replied Proddy; "but I've always been fortunate enough to escape 'em. Sorry to see you in such a state. When did it occur?"

"Ven!" exclaimed Bimbelot, in some confusion. "Oh, two or tree night ago."

"Well, it's strange I never heard of it," rejoined Proddy; "but they seem to have mauled you desperately. I hope you gave 'em as good as they brought. How many on 'em was there?"

"How many!" repeated Bimbelot. "Let me see—I can't exactly tell. How many should you say, mon caporal?"

"Ventrebleu! I didn't count 'em," replied Sauvageon. "Maybe two dozen."

"Two dozen!" exclaimed Proddy—"that was fearful odds. No wonder you came off so badly. Why, the serjeant found it difficult to—" But remembering his promise, he suddenly checked himself.

"Que dites vous, monsieur?" cried Bimbelot. "Vat vas you goin' to say?"

"I was goin' to say that I've just received

a letter from the serjeant, from the Hague," replied Proddy.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" exclaimed Bimbelot. "Is it possible he arrive there safely, after his wounds?"

"Wounds!" echoed Proddy, staring, "who told you he was wounded?"

"Why, you yourself, to be sure," rejoined Bimbelot, eager to repair his inadvertence. "You said just now that he was badly wounded—didn't he, corporal?"

Sauvageon growled an assent.

"Well, if I did, the word slipped out unawares," replied Proddy, reflecting. "It's true he got hurt by some cowardly ruffians on his way to the wherry. But it seems he thinks nothing of the accident, for he makes no allusion to it. However, his assailants wont so easily forget *him*. He said he had given 'em somethin' to remember him by—ha! ha!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Bimbelot, gnashing his teeth, and glancing at Sauvageon. "Sarpedieu! quand je suis retabli je creverai la tête de ce coquin."

"What's that you say, Bamby?" noticing the angry expression of the other's glance. "It's not polite to talk French in company of a gem'man as doesn't understand it."

"Pardon, mon cher cocher! pardon!" cried Bimbelot. "Je veux dire—vat I mean to say is dis, dat dose who encounter de sergent, vont forget him in a hurry—ha! ha!"

"No, I'll be bound they wont," replied Proddy, laughing.

"Nor forgive him eider," muttered Sauvageon. "Dey'll pay off deir old debts one of dese days."

"Eh! what's that, Savagejohn?" cried Proddy.

"Oh! noting — noting —" replied the corporal, "but you're always blowing de sergent's trumpet."

"And he deserves to have it blown," replied Proddy, proudly, "and pretty loudly too."

"I say, Proddy," observed Bimbelot, "did de sergent suspect who attack him, eh?"

"He more than suspected," replied Proddy, significantly. "It was certainty with him. He knew 'em perfectly."

"Ah, diable!" exclaimed Bimbelot. "And he told you deir names—eh?"

"No," replied Proddy, "he kept that to himself, because, as he said, he wished to settle accounts with 'em himself, when he came back!"

Bimbelot and Sauvageon exchanged

glances of apprehension, while Proddy muttered—

"Curse the rascals! I believe they're the men, and it'll do 'em good to frighten 'em a bit."

"Et comment se trouvent les dames—how do Mrs. Plumpton and Mrs. Tipping bear de sergent's absence?" asked Bimbelot, anxious to change the subject.

"Oh, pretty middlin',—as well as can be expected, poor things!" replied Proddy. "It's a sad loss."

"A sad loss, indeed,—poor tings!" echoed Bimbelot, secretly grinning. "Pray make our compliment, and say de corporal and I will do ourselves de honour to call and offer dem some consolation."

"I'll deliver your message, certainly," replied Proddy, "but I don't think it'll be of much use. You'd better call some

Wednesday evening, for then I shall be there."

"Dat will be an additional inducement," said Bimbelot; "we'll come next Wednesday, if noting occurs to prevent us. But you're not running away?"

"Yes I am," replied Proddy, rising; "good day, mounseers." And with sundry bows on both sides, he took his departure.

"Harkee, corporal," said Bimbelot, in his own tongue, as soon as the coachman was gone, "it would be a fair revenge on this cursed Scales to rob him of his mistresses while he's away? How say you? Shall we try it?"

"With all my heart," replied Sauvageon. "Perhaps we may succeed better this way than the other."

"Oh! I've no fear of failure," replied Bimbelot. "I flatter myself I possess as

many attractions in a lady's eyes as an old battered soldier. I will lay siege to Mrs. Tipping—you to Mrs. Plumpton."

"Agreed!" rejoined Sauvageon.

Punctual to their promise, the two Frenchmen repaired, on the appointed Wednesday evening, to Marlborough House. Bimbelot was dressed to the point in a velvet coat, satin vest, and silken hose; with a sword by his side, large lace ruffles on his wrists, and a well-powdered flowing peruke on his head. His master's toilette-table had been visited for his perfumes, and his left arm was supported by a silken sash. Thus decked out, he looked, in his own opinion, excessively handsome and interesting—in fact, irresistible.

The corporal had brushed himself up a little,—powdered his wig, and put a new tie to his enormous pigtail; but his personal

appearance, never very attractive, was by no means improved by a thick bandage across the brow.

Arrived at their destination, they proceeded at once to the kitchen, where they found most of the household assembled, including Mr. Brumby, the duke's coachman, whom they had not chanced to meet on any former occasion. Mr. Fishwick, who was recruiting himself with a tankard of ale, having been somewhat busily engaged in preparing for a grand banquet on the following day, gave them a hearty welcome; and the ladies professed themselves enchanted to see them. These greetings were scarcely over when Proddy made his appearance.

In pursuance of his scheme, Bimbelot devoted himself to Mrs. Tipping, paid her the most extravagant compliments, and

affected to be desperately in love with her; while she, who, it must be confessed, was somewhat of a coquette, gave him sufficient encouragement.

The corporal's progress was not equally rapid with Mrs. Plumpton. Whether he was not gifted with the same powers of pleasing as his friend, or whether Mrs. Plumpton was more constant to the serjeant than Mrs. Tipping, it boots not to inquire; but his compliments all fell to the ground, and his fine speeches were wasted on inattentive ears.

A quiet observer of what was going forward, Proddy pretended to be engaged in conversation with his brother whip, Mr. Brumby, but he kept his eyes and ears open to the others, and after some time, seeing the encouragement given to Bimbelot by Mrs. Tipping, he thought it his duty to interfere.

"Well, I'm sure, Mrs. Tipping," he cried, "you seem vastly pleased with Mounseer Bamby's attentions. I wonder what the serjeant would say if he was here. It's perhaps as well that he isn't."

"I don't see what the serjeant could complain of, Mr. Proddy," replied Mrs. Tipping, pertly. "I'm not aware that I'm under an obligation not to talk to any one else in his absence."

"And even if you were, ma mignonne, it's of no consequence," replied Bimbelot. "A soldier never expects fidelity; and if he does—ha! ha! But I don't see what de serjeant can do wid two wives. Is it settled vich is to be Mrs. Scale?"

"Did he propose to you, Plumpton?" asked Mrs. Tipping.

"I shan't answer the question," replied the other. "Did he propose to *you*, Tipping?"

"And I shan't answer the question neither," she rejoined.

"It's plain he's trifling wid de feelings of bote," said Bimbelot.

"That's false!" cried Proddy. "The serjeant is incapable of trifling with anything, or anybody. He's always in earnest. He means to marry——"

"Which of 'em, Proddy," interrupted Brumby, with a laugh, "for I'll be whipped if I can tell. And what is more, I don't think either of the women can."

"It's too bad of the serjeant," cried Mr. Timperley, joining in the laugh. "He don't give other people a chance."

"Not the slightest," cried the portly Mr. Parker, the butler. "I agree with you, Timperley, it's too bad."

"C'est affreux—intolerable!" cried Bimbelot, with an impassioned look at Mrs. Tip-

ping. "I hope he'll be kill'd in de wars," he added, in an under tone.

"No whisperin', Bamby!" cried Proddy, marching up to him. "No squeezin' of hands! I don't allow it."

"And pray, Monseer Proddy, who gave you de right to interfere?" inquired Bimbelot, angrily.

"The serjeant!" replied the coachman, boldly. "These ladies were committed to me by him, and I'll take care of 'em as long as I can."

"Very much obliged to you, Mr. Proddy," rejoined Mrs. Tipping; "but we fancy we can take care of ourselves."

"It's only fancy, then, to judge from what I see goin' forward," observed the coachman.

"Well, I wish the serjeant was back

again, with all my heart," cried Fishwick; "It did one good to hear his adventures."

"Ay, I was never tired of hearin' him tell how he beat the mounseers," said Proddy, with a glance at the two Frenchmen. "Did you ever hear him relate how he mounted the half-moon of Ypres at the siege of Menin?"

"Never," replied Fishwick; "and if you can recollect it, let's have it."

Thus exhorted, Proddy went to the fire-place, and taking down the spit, tied the two corners of his handkerchief to its point, so as to produce something like a resemblance to a flag. This done, he snatched up a ladle, and to the infinite diversion of the Frenchmen, and indeed of the company generally, planted himself before the cook, and commenced his narration.

"Well," he said, "you must know that

Menin is one of the strongest forts in Flanders, and esteemed the masterpiece of the renowned Marshal Vauban."

"Marshal Vauban is de first engineer in de world," cried Sauvageon.

"Be that as it may, he couldn't build a fort as could hold out against the Duke of Marlborough," pursued Proddy. "But that's neither here nor there. To proceed: besides being strongly built and well garrisoned, the fort of Menin was rendered difficult of approach, owing to the inundations of the river Lys. Howsomever, the duke takes up a position before it, and after the place has been invested for nearly a month, the works bein' sufficiently advanced to allow of an attack, the signal is given by the blowing up of two mines, which have been laid near the angles of a bastion called the half-moon of Ypres. Amid the silence followin' this

tremendous clatter, the first detachment of the besiegers, amongst whom was our serjeant, dashes up to the palisades that protected a covered way communicatin' with the fortress, and throwin' a quantity of grenades into it, forces their way in, amidst the confusion occasioned by the explosion. You may guess the strife and carnage that ensues, for every inch o' ground is fiercely contested. Meanwhile, our serjeant works his way on, through a heavy fire, with his comrades dropping around him at every step, over courtine and counterscarp, till he stands in the very face of the half-moon itself. A scalin'-ladder is planted, but so fierce is the fire, that no one will mount, till our serjeant, steppin' before his officer, runs up the ladder, and cuttin' down two of the enemy, and snatchin' up a flag fixed on the bastion, waves it over his head, and shouts

at the top of his voice, "Come on, my lads!"

As Proddy said this, he sprang upon a small stool, and planting his right foot on a chair near it, raised the mimic flag over his head, and pointing with his ladle towards the imaginary half-moon of his narration, roared out again with stentorian lungs—"Come on, my lads, I say! We'll give these mounseers another drubbin'. Come on! Victory and Marlborough!"

At the same time, he glared terribly at Bimbelot, who turned aside his head, affecting to be greatly alarmed, though he was convulsed with laughter, while Sauvageon covered his face with his hat to hide his merriment. Fishwick plucked off his cap, and waving it in the air, cheered loudly; whilst acclamations resounded from the rest of the company.

So delighted was Proddy with the effect he had produced, that he remained for nearly five minutes in the same attitude, continually shouting—"Come on, my lads! —come on!"

"So like the dear serjeant!" exclaimed Mrs. Plumpton, gazing at him in rapt admiration.

"I don't know whether I'm most frightened or delighted," said Mrs. Tipping. "The dear serjeant oughtn't to risk his precious life in this way."

"Well, what happened next, brother Proddy?" asked Brumby, who was leaning over the back of a chair behind the coachman, and began to be somewhat tired of the constant repetition of the same cries.

"Ay, there's the unfortinatest part of it," replied Proddy; "just as the words was out of our serjeant's mouth, a bullet comes and

hits him slap on the shoulder, and knocks him clean off the half-moon."

In describing which disastrous occurrence, the coachman unluckily lost his own equilibrium. Tumbling backwards, he caught hold of Brumby and Mrs. Tipping, and dragged them both to the floor with him.

The rest of the party flew to their assistance, and on being helped up again, it was found that no damage had been sustained by any one.

By no means discouraged by the accident, Proddy recounted some more of the serjeant's achievements, and seemed to have a malicious pleasure in dwelling upon his frequent threshings of the French.

"I dare say he'll have plenty to tell us when he comes back," said Fishwick. "I anticipate another glorious campaign for the duke."

"It is next to impossible he can go beyond his former successes," said Proddy.

"Fortune may shange," observed Sauvageon, "and de duke himself may experience a reverse."

"I don't think it very likely," observed Brumby; "it has been frequently predicted, but has never yet come to pass."

"Nor ever will," said Parker.

Soon after this, supper was served in the servants' hall, and the two Frenchmen required little pressing to induce them to sit down to it. Bimbelot contrived to obtain a place near Mrs. Tipping, and Proddy remarked that he seemed to make further progress in her good graces. Vexation took away his appetite, and he would neither eat nor drink, notwithstanding the jests passed upon him by Fishwick and Brumby.

At length, the hour of departure came.

The coachman bade a sullen adieu to his female friends; but remarking that Bimbelot did not come forth with Sauvageon, he went back to see what he was about, and as he traversed the passage leading to the kitchen, he observed the French valet creeping into a cupboard.

Without saying a word, he walked quickly up to the spot, locked the door, took out the key, put it into his pocket, and, chuckling to himself at the trick he was playing, quitted the house.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THE DAY FOR THE MARRIAGE IS FIXED BY THE QUEEN.

THE queen and her consort were alone together in the library of Saint James's palace, when an usher announced that the Duke of Marlborough and the lord treasurer requested an audience.

"Admit them," said Anne. "Some new demand, I suppose," she remarked to the prince.

"Nay, I see not that," he replied. "Most

likely they come to tell us that the Chevalier de Saint-George has landed in Scotland. Or he may be captured."

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated the queen, hastily.

As the exclamation was uttered, Marlborough and Godolphin entered the presence.

"We bring your majesty good tidings," said the duke: "the invasion is at an end."

"Then it is true he is taken?" cried Anne.

"The pretender? — no," replied Marlborough.

"He is not slain?" asked the queen.

"No, he lives to trouble your majesty further," rejoined the duke.

"Heaven be praised! she ejaculated.

"But what has happened, your grace— what has happened?" interposed Prince George.

"Your highness is well aware," replied Marlborough, "that after the French expedition had encountered Admiral Byng in the Frith of Forth, its commander changed his intentions, and made for Inverness, in expectation that an insurrection would be made in the pretender's favour."

"I am aware of it," said the prince; "and I am also aware that it is mainly, if not entirely, owing to the excellent precautionary measures taken by your grace that the insurrection has been crushed."

"Your highness does me much honour," rejoined Marlborough, bowing. "But to the point. The very elements seem to have warred in our favour. A violent storm prevented the expedition from landing, and, driven out to sea, they have at last succeeded, after various disasters and severe losses, in getting back to Dunkirk."

"Then we are as much indebted to the weather as to our own exertions for deliverance," said the queen.

"Bloodshed unquestionably has been prevented," replied the duke. "Yet it may be doubted whether the pretender would not have received a severer lesson if he had landed his forces. He might not have lived to repeat the attempt. However, all present danger is at an end, and the lord treasurer and myself are come to offer your majesty our congratulations on the fortunate issue of an affair which seemed fraught with so much perplexity and peril."

"I thank you heartily, my lords," replied Anne.

"Loyal addresses will be presented to your majesty on the occasion from both houses of parliament," said Godolphin, "in which it is to be hoped that our conduct

will be approved, (if it shall be found, on consideration, to merit approval,) and that of our enemies, and the enemies of the country, duly censured."

"No doubt of it, my lord," replied Prince George—"no doubt of it. Full testimony will be borne to your deserts, who have managed her majesty's treasure so admirably, and to those of the duke, who has commanded her armies with such distinguished glory."

"One thing I trust her majesty will deign to state in her reply," said Marlborough; "that she will henceforth place her dependence only upon those who have given such repeated proofs of their zeal for the security of her throne, and for the maintenance of the Protestant succession."

"I shall remember what you say, my lord," replied Anne, coldly.

"Your majesty will also remember," said Godolphin, "and it would be well to insist upon it, that all that is dear to your people, and has been secured by your government, would be irretrievably lost if the designs of the Popish pretender should ever take effect."

"Enough, my lord," cried Anne, angrily —"I have been schooled sufficiently."

"All danger of the invasion being over," said Marlborough, "I must crave your majesty's permission to join your forces in Flanders. Prince Eugene is impatiently awaiting me at the Hague, to mature preparations for the ensuing campaign."

"You have it," replied the queen. "And when do you propose to set forth?"

"To-morrow," returned the duke, "unless your majesty has need of me further."

"I shall grieve to lose your grace," said

Anne. "But I know that you go to win fresh honours for me, and new laurels for yourself."

"I go with somewhat less spirit than heretofore, gracious madam," rejoined the duke, "because I know that I leave an insidious enemy at work to counteract all my efforts for the advancement of your welfare. I implore you, as you value the security of your government, and the prosperity of your kingdom, to dismiss Abigail Hill from your service. She is a mere tool in the hands of Harley, and as long as she is near you, to pour the poison of that serpent into your ear, it will be in vain to hope for your confidence. All our best efforts will be neutralized. By the zeal and devotion I have ever shewn your majesty—and am prepared to shew you to the last—I conjure you to listen to me."

"Do not trouble yourself about my domestic arrangements, my lord," replied the queen; "Abigail is merely my waiting woman."

"Ostensibly she is," replied the duke, "but you yourself, gracious madam, are scarcely aware of the influence she exercises over you. It is apparent to the whole court—nay, to foreign courts—and does you and your ministry incalculable mischief."

"It is but a variation of the old cry, your grace," said Anne. "A short while ago, it was said I was governed by the Duchess of Marlborough; now they affirm I am governed by Abigail Hill."

"I trust your majesty will not degrade the duchess by instituting a comparison between her and Abigail," replied the duke, proudly.

" There is no comparison between them, my lord," said Anne.

" A faithful adviser is necessary to a sovereign," rejoined Godolphin; " and it has ever been said that your majesty was singularly fortunate in having such a confidante as the duchess."

" If loyalty and devotion are titles to the office, her grace possesses the requisites in an eminent degree," added the duke.

" She has more than those," said Godolphin, firmly; " she has judgment such as no other woman in the kingdom possesses."

" And arrogance to match it," replied the queen, bitterly.

" I have long felt that her grace has incurred your majesty's displeasure," said the duke, " and I feared the occasion of it. Haughty and imperious she is, I grant. But her whole heart is yours."

"I do not dispute it, my lord," replied Anne, softened. "In spite of her violence of manner, I do believe the duchess loves me."

"She is devoted to you," rejoined the duke; "and my parting entreaty of your majesty is to beseech you to confide in her."

And bending the knee, he pressed the queen's hand to his lips.

"Farewell, my lord," said Anne. "Every good wish attend you."

And with obeisances to the prince, the duke and the treasurer withdrew.

"Your majesty is firm in your adherence to Abigail, I perceive," said the prince, taking a pinch of snuff.

"They take the very means to bind me more strongly to her," replied the queen.

"I am glad of it," observed the prince. "Masham was with me this morning, and

implored me to intercede with you to consent to his marriage."

"I am wearied to death with these repeated solicitations," said Anne, good-humouredly, "and must put an end to them in some way or other. Send for Abigail."

"Instantly!" replied the prince, hurrying off to the usher, and muttering as he went, "We must not lose the lucky moment."

A few minutes afterwards, the favourite entered the presence.

"The Duke of Marlborough and the lord treasurer have just been here, Abigail, and have demanded your dismissal," said the queen.

"Indeed, madam," replied the other, trembling. "Am I to understand then——"

"You are to understand that you are to be united to Mr. Masham to-morrow," replied Anne.

"Oh, madam," replied Abigail, throwing herself at the queen's feet. "Pardon me, if I do not thank you properly. My heart would speak if it could."

"Nay, I require no thanks," replied Anne. "I am happy in making you happy, and my conduct will shew your enemies that I am not to be diverted from loving and befriending you by menaces or entreaties. Still, as I wish to avoid any scene on the occasion, the marriage shall take place privately, in the evening, in the rooms of my physician, Dr. Arbuthnot."

"Admirably resolved!" cried the prince.

"Oh! I hope the duchess will not hear of it," cried Abigail.

"She is not likely to do so," rejoined the queen. "And now I will no longer detain you. There are times when one desires to be alone—to indulge one's feelings unre-

strained. Take this pocket-book. It contains two thousand pounds—your wedding portion."

"Your majesty overwhelms me with kindness!" cried Abigail, in a voice of heart-felt emotion.

"I will take care to apprise Masham of the good fortune in store for him," said the prince; "and I offer your majesty thanks in his name for your goodness. You have made us all very happy," he added, brushing away a tear, "very—very happy."

Abigail attempted to speak, but words failed her; and with a look of the deepest devotion and gratitude at the queen, she retired.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH SET OUT FOR FLANDERS.

THE Duke of Marlborough adhered to his resolution of departing on the following day. A barge was ordered to be in waiting at Whitehall Stairs to convey him on board the vessel he was to sail in, which was moored off Queenhithe. The duke wished to embark privately, but the duchess overruled his desire, and the state carriage was commanded to be in readiness at noon.

Rumours having got abroad that the duke was about to set out for Flanders, on that day, long before the hour fixed for his departure, a vast crowd collected in front of Marlborough House. This was what the duchess had calculated upon, and she congratulated herself upon the success of her scheme, as she watched the momently-increasing throng from the windows of her superb abode.

A little before twelve, the duke requested the attendance of the duchess in his closet. It was to bid her farewell. He seemed deeply affected, and taking her hand, remained for some time silent. The duchess was less moved, but it required the exercise of all her fortitude to prevent her from bursting into tears.

"I go away with an aching heart," said the duke, at length; "for though all seems

bright and prosperous at this moment, I discern a storm gathering afar off."

"I am depressed by the thoughts of losing you," replied the duchess, tenderly. "But I have no presentiments of ill."

"My beloved wife!" cried the duke, straining her to his breast. "Heaven knows what I suffer in these separations!"

"I suffer as much as your grace," replied the duchess. "But you are wedded to glory as well as to me, and when my comate calls you hence I do not repine."

"You are an heroic woman!" cried the duke, gazing at her with the deepest admiration. "Oh, Sarah! matchless in beauty as in judgment, Heaven has indeed been bountiful in vouchsafing me such a treasure. But if I look on you longer, I shall never be able to tear myself away. One word before we part. Be prudent with the

queen. Do not irritate her further. She is inflexible in her adherence to Abigail."

"Before your grace returns, the minion will be dismissed," rejoined the duchess.

"I doubt it," said the duke, shaking his head.

"You know not the extent of my power," replied the duchess, with self-complacence. "Shall I tell your grace a secret? I have just learnt, from a confidential agent in the palace—the usher who attends the library—that the queen designs to marry her favourite to young Masham this evening."

"This evening!" exclaimed the duke.

"It is intended that the marriage shall take place privately in Dr. Arbuthnot's rooms in the palace," pursued the duchess. "Well, what does your grace say to it?"

"Say to it!" echoed the duke. "What should I say? It cannot be prevented."

"You think so?" returned the duchess. "The first letter you receive from me will be to announce that this marriage—arranged by the queen—has been stopped."

"I advise you not to interfere," said Marlborough. "It is too petty a matter to meddle with."

"Small beginnings lead to great consequences," said the duchess. "I will pluck up the weed betimes."

Further remonstrance on the duke's part was interrupted by the entrance of Timperley, to say that the carriage was in readiness. Once more tenderly embracing the duchess, Marlborough took her hand, and led her down the great staircase. As the illustrious pair passed through the hall on their way to the carriage, they found it thronged with the various members of the household, who were drawn up to bid their

beloved lord farewell. Amongst these was Proddy, who was transported almost out of his senses by a nod of recognition from the duke.

As Marlborough was seen to issue from the door, a tremendous shout rent the air, and, in spite of all the efforts of the porters at the gates, the court was instantly filled with a mass of persons eager to bid him adieu. Acknowledging their greetings with repeated bows, the duke stepped into the carriage after the duchess. It required all the management of Mr. Brumby, and of the postillion who was mounted on one of the leaders, to manœuvre the carriage out of the gates without injuring some of the throng; but this feat safely accomplished, renewed cheers and huzzas burst from the crowd outside, the whole of whom uncovered their heads, as if by a preconcerted signal, at

the sight of the hero they had flocked to behold.

Scared by the shouts, a flight of rooks, which built in the trees near Marlborough House, sprang screaming into the air. They were instantly answered by another flock from the royal gardens, who attacked them in mid-air, and drove them back again to their roosts—a circumstance that did not pass unnoticed by some of the more curious observers.

Meantime, hundreds of faces, in succession, appeared at the windows of the carriage, and benedictions were heaped upon the duke's head. Hats were waved aloft, tossed on the point of sticks, or hurled in the air.

That no part of the triumph might be lost upon the inmates of the palace, the duchess had privately instructed Brumby to

drive up Saint James's-street—an arrangement which would have been opposed by the duke, if he had been aware of it; but he was not so, till too late. So on the carriage went in that direction at a foot's pace, for quicker progress was out of the question.

On arriving in front of the palace, the crowd was so dense that it was found impossible to move at all. To the cries of the postillion and Brumby to "make way," the crowd only answered by shouts and vociferations, and pressed closer and closer round the carriage. At last, seeing the difficulty in which the duke was placed, those nearest him exclaimed, "Take out the horses, and we'll draw the carriage!"

The cry was answered by a thousand applauding voices—"Take out the horses! take out the horses!" resounded on every side.

The duke was so circumstanced that he could not refuse consent, and in an instant the wheelers were unfastened by Timperley and another servant, and the leaders driven off by the postillion. The pole of the carriage was then seized by some dozen eager hands, while another band attached a stout rope to the axletree, and harnessed themselves to it. Brumby still retained his seat on the box, and flourished his whip, though deprived of his reins, declaring "he had never driven such a team before."

The carriage was then put in motion amid the reiterated shouts and applauses of the spectators, hundreds of whom eagerly offered themselves as relays when the others should be tired.

The triumph of the duchess was complete. As she glanced towards the palace, she fancied she discovered the queen at an upper

window, attracted thither, no doubt, by the prodigious clamour of the multitude.

In this way, the carriage was borne up Saint James's-street and along Piccadilly, until it was finally brought to Whitehall-stairs, where, after bidding adieu to the duchess, amid acclamations which the roar of artillery could not drown, the duke entered his barge.

The Duke of Marlborough's departure for Flanders

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE MARRIAGE WAS FORBIDDEN BY THE DUCHESS, AND WHAT FOLLOWED THE INTERRUPTION.

At seven o'clock on the same evening, a small but very illustrious party was collected together in Doctor Arbuthnot's rooms in the palace. It consisted of the queen and her consort, Masham, Abigail, Harley, and Doctor Francis Atterbury, dean of Carlisle. Of this celebrated person, who afterwards became Bishop of Rochester,

occasion may be found to speak more fully hereafter, as well as of his friend, the witty and learned Doctor Arbuthnot.

The object of the meeting, it need scarcely be stated, was the consummation of Masham's wishes, in regard to his union with Abigail, and Doctor Atterbury was just about to commence the ceremony, when, to the surprise and consternation of all present, except, perhaps, Harley, the door opened, and the Duchess of Marlborough, followed by Guiscard, entered the room.

"I am in time!" she cried, looking around with a smile of triumph. "You thought to steal a march on me. But you see I am acquainted with your movements."

"Who can have betrayed us to her?" muttered the queen.

"Why was I not invited to this mar-

riage?" cried the duchess. "Surely I, Abigail's nearest female relation, should have been asked to it?"

"It was an omission, certainly, duchess," said the prince; "but her majesty fancied you would be completely engrossed by the duke's departure for Flanders."

"An evasion, prince!" cried the duchess, angrily. "Her majesty did not desire me to be present."

"You are right, duchess," replied Anne, coldly; "and you have presumed too much upon my good-nature in coming. Remain or not, as you please, but the ceremony shall no longer be delayed. Proceed, sir," she added to Atterbury.

"Hold!" exclaimed the duchess. "This marriage cannot take place. I forbid it. I told your majesty before, to beware how you gave your consent."

"Your grace is neither Miss Hill's parent nor guardian?" said Atterbury.

"I stand in the place of both," replied the duchess; "and you shall hear the grounds on which I offer my interference. When Abigail Hill entered her majesty's service, she gave me absolute disposal of her hand. Let her gainsay it if she can."

Abigail was silent.

"Since she declines to answer, this document will speak for her," replied the duchess, handing a paper to the queen. "You will find I have not advanced an untruth."

"Why did you not tell me of this before, Abigail?" demanded the queen, somewhat sharply.

"She did not dare to do so," replied the duchess.

"I did not suppose the duchess would act upon it," said Abigail.

"You treat the matter too lightly," cried the queen, with severity. "You have given her full power over you, and must abide by your own act."

"Your majesty!" exclaimed Abigail.

"You must ask her consent to the match, ay—and obtain it, too, before it can take place," pursued the queen.

"I knew your majesty would decide rightly," said the duchess.

"Then it is at an end, indeed!" cried Abigail, "for your majesty well knows it is in vain to appeal to her."

"I cannot help you further," said Anne; "and if I had been aware of this instrument, I would not have allowed the matter to proceed so far."

"Spoken like yourself, madam," cried the duchess. "No one has a nicer sense of justice than your majesty."

"How comes her grace never to have mentioned this instrument before?" asked Prince George.

"I thought it sufficient to forbid the union," replied the duchess. "Abigail ought to have asked my consent."

"Your majesty having admitted the duchess's right to dispose of Abigail's hand under this document," said Harley, advancing, "will, I am sure, agree with me, that if she objects to Mr. Masham, she is bound to say whom she would propose as a husband for the lady."

"You are right, sir," said the queen "She shall name some one, or the present match shall take place."

"I am willing to abide by your majesty's decision," said the duchess, "and think it influenced by the same high principles of justice as those which have distinguished

your judgments throughout. I gave it as my opinion before, that Abigail could not do better than accept the Marquis de Guiscard. Since I am called upon to name some one, I assign her hand to him."

"This cannot be!" cried Masham, indignantly. "The marquis——"

"Peace!" interrupted Harley. "Your grace has made your nomination. If it is agreed to—good! If not, Abigail is free to make her own choice?"

"Undoubtedly," replied the duchess.

"Hear me!" exclaimed Masham.

"Peace, sir!" cried Harley. "What says the Marquis de Guiscard, then? Is he inclined to accede to the duchess's proposition? Will he consent to unite himself to Miss Hill?"

"I must take time to consider of it," replied the marquis.

"Consider!" cried the duchess—"Consider!"

"He may well do so," rejoined Masham.

"The answer must be at once," said the queen.

"Then I decline the proposed honour, madam," returned Guiscard.

"How, marquis!" cried the duchess, furiously.

"After this declaration, Abigail is free," said Harley.

"Most assuredly," replied the queen.

"I protest against it," cried the duchess.

"Nay, duchess, the queen decides against you," cried Harley, in a tone of bitter irony; "and no one has a nicer sense of justice than her majesty."

"If I had been allowed to speak, I would have disposed of the matter at once," said Masham. "The marquis is married already.

He was wedded only three days ago at the Fleet, to Angelica Hyde, the cast-off mistress of Mr. Henry Saint-John."

"I have been over-reached in this matter," cried the duchess, furiously. "It is all Mr. Harley's knavery. As to you, marquis, you shall bitterly rue your share in it."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Harley. "Her grace has over-reached herself, and she now visits her rage and disappointment on others. I pray your majesty, let the marriage proceed. The duchess will offer no further opposition to it."

"She will be revenged on you all!" cried the duchess, in extremity of passion.

"Hark'ee, duchess," whispered Harley. "I told you this marriage should precede your downfall, and so it will."

"You have beaten me on this point," rejoined the duchess, in the same tone; "but

it will avail you nothing. I will never rest till I have driven you from the palace."

And she flounced out of the room without even making an obeisance to the queen.

The marriage ceremony then commenced. Prince George gave the bride away, and in a few minutes more Masham and Abigail were united.

"I can now claim your promise, cousin," said Harley, in a low tone, as he advanced to salute the bride.

"You can," she replied. "Look upon the duchess's overthrow as certain, and the treasurer's staff as already in your hand."

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

SAINT JAMES'S:

OR,

THE COURT OF QUEEN ANNE.

Book the Third.

ROBERT HARLEY.

CHAPTER I.

GIVES A SLIGHT INSIGHT INTO THE PROGRESS OF HARLEY'S INTRIGUES FOR POWER.

Two years and upwards had elapsed, and Abigail's promise remained unfulfilled. The Whigs were still in power, and the Marlborough family paramount in influence. But neither delay nor defeat discouraged Harley. Resolved to hazard nothing by precipitation, he carefully strengthened himself so as to be sure of holding his place when he obtained it. His measures, at

first obscure, and apparently devoid of purpose, began to grow defined and intelligible.

Confident of the support of the Tories, and of those in the Jacobite interest, he at last succeeded in winning over some of the opposite party, and among others, Earl Rivers, who became his confidential agent, and acquainted him with all the designs of his colleagues. By working upon his vanity and jealousy, he managed likewise to estrange the Duke of Somerset, and the queen was prevailed upon to aid in the scheme, by constantly inviting the duke to her private conferences, and flattering his inordinate self-esteem. The Duke of Shrewsbury was also gained over by similar arts, though he hesitated to commit himself by any step which should compromise him with his party.

While thus providing himself with supporters, Harley strove to undermine the stronghold of his opponents. Having long since, as has been seen, succeeded in rendering the Duchess of Marlborough obnoxious to the sovereign, and unpopular with the court, he now turned his weapons chiefly against the duke.

Three more campaigns, which, if not distinguished by victories as glorious as those of Blenheim and Ramilies, still were sufficiently brilliant, had been added to the roll of Marlborough's achievements. The first of these passed off without any remarkable action; but in the summer of 1708, the important battle of Oudenard was gained; and in the autumn of the succeeding year —namely, the 11th September, 1709—the fiercely contested and memorable victory of Malplaquet occurred. In the latter ter-

rible conflict, the French, who, by the admission of both Marlborough and Eugene, performed almost prodigies of valour, lost nearly fourteen thousand men, while the triumph of the confederate armies was dearly purchased. Stigmatizing the battle as a wanton and injudicious carnage, Harley went so far as to insinuate that the duke had exposed his officers to certain destruction in order to profit by the sale of their commissions; and monstrous and improbable as the calumny appears, it nevertheless found some credence amongst those who had lost relatives and friends on that fatal field.

It must be admitted, also, that the duke's ruling passion, avarice, coupled with his wife's undisguised rapacity, favoured assertions like the present, and caused it at last to be generally believed that the war was

prolonged rather for his own benefit than for the glory of the nation. There were many, however, who, though fully sensible of the duke's high deserts, and of the groundlessness and malice of such accusations as the above, allowed their desire for peace to outweigh every other consideration, and joined the cry, in the hope of obtaining the object of their wishes.

Marlborough, unintentionally, aided the designs of his enemy. Convinced that he had irrecoverably lost the queen's favour, and anxious, while he had yet power, to fortify himself against further opposition, which he foresaw he should have to encounter, he applied to the chancellor, to ascertain whether a patent, appointing him captain-general of the forces for life, could not be obtained. To his surprise and mor-

tification, the answer was, that the appointment would be irregular and unconstitutional; therefore, the grant could not be made; and though further inquiries were instituted through other channels, the replies were equally unfavourable.

Undeterred by these opinions, the duke determined to make a direct application to the queen; and with this view, immediately after the victory of Malplaquet, judging it a fitting season, he was unwise enough to employ the duchess on the mission. Prepared for the request by Harley, and glad of an opportunity of mortifying her former favourite, but present object of unmitigated dislike, Anne gave a decided refusal.

"I shall not remonstrate with your majesty upon your decision," said the duchess; "but since the duke's services are thus disregarded, I must announce to

you his positive intention to retire at the close of the war."

"If your grace had said at the close of the present campaign, I should have understood you better," replied the queen, with bitter significance; "but if the duke only means to relinquish his command at the end of the war, I know not when his design may be put into execution."

"Your majesty does not mean to echo Mr. Harley's false and dishonourable cry, that the Duke of Marlborough intentionally protracts the war?" cried the duchess, with difficulty controlling her passion.

"I echo no cry but that of my people for peace," replied Anne. "They complain of the perpetual demand for fresh supplies, and I own that I sympathize with them."

"Well, then," cried the duchess, "you

shall *have* peace. But I warn you, it will be worse than war."

In spite of her resolution to the contrary, Anne was disturbed by the duchess's implied menace. Left to herself, she could not refrain from tears; and she murmured—"Ah! my dear, lost husband, this is one of the occasions when I should have felt the benefit of your support and counsel."

Anne had now been a widow just a year. Her amiable consort, Prince George of Denmark, expired on the 23rd October, 1708. Constant in attendance upon him during his illness, Anne made no display of her grief when his sufferings were ended, and might have been supposed by an indifferent or harsh observer to have felt little regret for his loss. But it was not so. She mourned him sincerely, though secretly; and almost the only person acquainted with the

extent of her affliction was Mrs. Masham, who was destined to be a witness to her emotion on the present occasion.

"In tears, gracious madam!" cried the confidante, who had approached unobserved. "I trust the duchess has offered you no new indignity?"

"She has made a request of me, on behalf of the duke, which I have refused—peremptorily refused," replied Anne. "My grief, however, is not caused by her, but by thoughts of my dear lost husband."

"In that case, I can only sympathize with you, madam," replied Mrs. Masham. "I will not affect to lament the prince as deeply as your majesty; but my sorrow is only second to your own."

"My dear husband had a great regard for you," rejoined the queen—"a great regard. His last recommendation to me was

—'Keep the Mashams always near you. They will serve you faithfully.'"

"And we will make good his highness's words," returned Mrs. Masham; "but oh! let us dwell no more on this distressing subject, gracious madam."

"It relieves my heart to open it to you," replied Anne. "It is one of the penalties of royalty to be obliged to sacrifice private feeling to public duties. Abigail," she continued, in a broken voice, "I am now alone. I have neither husband nor children. My brother is in arms against me—my house is desolate—and the crown I wear is a barren one. I dare not think upon the succession to the throne; for others order it for me."

"Alas, madam!" exclaimed Mrs. Masham.

"Oh that my brother could enjoy his in-

heritance!" cried the queen, with a look of anguish.

"Let Mr. Harley once be at the head of affairs, madam," returned the other, "and I am sure your desires can be accomplished."

"The season is at hand for his advancement," said Anne. "I have just read the duchess a lesson, and shall lose no opportunity now of mortifying and affronting her. When Marlborough returns, I shall give him clearly to understand that he can expect nothing further at my hands. But where is Mr. Harley? I have not seen him this morning."

"He is without, in the ante-chamber," replied Mrs. Masham, "and only waits your leisure for an audience."

"He stands upon needless ceremony," replied the queen. "Bid him come in."

And the next moment, Harley being in-

troduced, Anne informed him what had passed between herself and the duchess.

"I am glad your majesty has acted with such becoming spirit," replied Harley. "The duke will feel his refusal keenly, but I can furnish you with another plan of galling him yet more sensibly. By the death of the Earl of Essex, which has just occurred, two important military preferments have become vacant,—namely, the lieutenancy of the Tower, and a regiment. These appointments, I need not tell your majesty, are usually made by the commander-in-chief."

"And you would have me dispose of them?" said the queen.

"Precisely," replied Harley; "and if I might venture to recommend a fitting person for the lieutenancy, it would be Lord Rivers."

"Why, he is a Whig!" exclaimed Anne.

"He is a friend of your majesty's friends," returned Harley, smiling.

"He shall have the place, then," said the queen.

"I have asked few favours for myself, gracious madam," interposed Mrs. Masham; "but I now venture to solicit the vacant regiment for my brother, Colonel Hill."

"It is his," replied the queen, graciously, "and I am happy in being able to oblige you."

Mrs. Masham was profuse in her thanks.

"This will be a bitter mortification to Marlborough," replied Harley, "and will accelerate his retirement. His grace is not what he was, even with the multitude, and your majesty will see the sorry welcome he will experience on his return. I have at last brought to bear a project which I have

long conceived, for rousing the whole of the high-church party in our favour. The unconscious agent in my scheme is Doctor Henry Sacheverell, rector of Saint Saviour's, Southwark, a bigoted, but energetic divine, who, on the next fifth of November, will preach a sermon in Saint Paul's, which, like a trumpet sounded from a high place, will stir up the whole city. His text will be, the 'Perils from false brethren;' and having read the discourse, I can speak confidently to its effect."

"I hope it may not prove prejudicial to your cause," said the queen, uneasily.

"Be not alarmed, madam," replied Harley. "But you shall hear the purport of the sermon, and judge for yourself of its tendency. Its first aim is, to shew that the means used to bring about the Revolution were odious and unjustifiable,

and to condemn the doctrine of resistance as inconsistent with the principles then laid down, and derogatory to the memory of his late majesty. The second is, that the licence granted by law to protestant dissenters is unreasonable, and that it is the duty of all superior pastors to anathematize those entitled to the benefit of toleration. The third, that the church of England is in a condition of great peril and adversity under the present administration, notwithstanding the vote recently passed to the contrary effect. The fourth and chief article is, that your majesty's administration, both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs, is tending to the destruction of the constitution; that there are many exalted members, both of church and state, who are false brethren, striving to undermine, weaken, and betray the establishment. Reprobated

under the character of Volpane, the treasurer himself comes in for the doctor's severest censure. Such is the sum of the discourse, which concludes with the strongest exhortations to the true supporters of the church to stand forth in its defence. Your majesty will agree with me that it is not likely to fail at this juncture."

"It seems a hazardous measure," observed the queen; "but I have no doubt you have well considered it, and therefore I will not oppose you. It may lead to what I chiefly desire, though I dare breathe it only to yourself and Abigail—the restoration of the succession to my father's house."

"No doubt of it, madam," replied Harley, with as much confidence as if he had really believed what he avouched.

CHAPTER II.

HOW DOCTOR SACHEVERELL PREACHED HIS SERMON AT SAINT PAUL'S; AND HOW HE WAS IMPEACHED IN CONSEQUENCE.

On the fifth of November, 1709, Doctor Sacheverell preached his celebrated sermon, as arranged by Harley, at Saint Paul's, before the lord mayor, Sir Samuel Garrard, and the aldermen, and its effect was quite as extraordinary as had been anticipated. Carried away by the vehemence and earnestness of the preacher, and only imperfectly comprehending the drift of the discourse,

the lord mayor highly commended it, and requested that it might be printed. This was precisely what Sacheverell desired; he immediately took the astute citizen at his word, and not only printed the sermon, but dedicated it to him.

Upwards of forty thousand copies were sold in a few days, and it became the general subject of conversation and discussion throughout the city. A firebrand cast into a field of dry flax could not have caused a more sudden and far-spreading blaze than this inflammatory discourse. The cry was everywhere raised that the church was in danger, and that the ministers were its worst enemies. Meetings were convened in various quarters, at which denunciations were hurled against them, and Sacheverell was proclaimed the champion of the high church.

This popular tumult would have subsided as speedily as it rose, if it had not been kept alive and heightened by the arts of Harley and his adherents. Godolphin would have willingly passed the matter over with silent contempt; but this was not Harley's design; and though openly opposing the matter, he secretly contrived to push forward the impeachment of the doctor—well knowing, that the attempt to punish a clergyman was the surest way to confirm the report that the church was in danger.

So much noise, at length, was made about the libellous discourse, that it could not be disregarded, and acting under the direction of the ministry, Mr. John Dolben, son of the late Archbishop of York, complained in the house of the sermon as factious and seditious, and calculated to promote rebellion; consequently, after some further

speeches to the same purpose, nothing being advanced in the doctor's defence, a resolution was passed that the sermon was "a malicious, scandalous, and seditious libel, highly reflecting upon her majesty and her government, the late happy Revolution and the protestant succession, and tending to alienate the affections of her majesty's good subjects, and to create jealousies and divisions among them."

It was then ordered, that Sacheverell, and his publisher, Henry Clements, should attend at the bar of the house next day. The injunction was obeyed, and, accompanied by Dr. Lancaster, Rector of Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields, and a hundred of his brother clergy who had espoused his cause, Sacheverell appeared to answer to the charge, which he boldly confessed. It was therefore agreed that he should be im-

peached at the bar of the House of Lords by Mr. Dolben.

Occasion was taken at the same time to pass a resolution in favour of a divine of exactly opposite tenets to the offender—namely, the Rev. Benjamin Hoadley, who, having strenuously justified the principles proceeded upon in the Revolution, was conceived to have merited the regard and recommendation of the house; and it was therefore resolved that an address should be presented to the queen entreating her to bestow some ecclesiastical dignity upon him. The address was afterwards presented by Mr. Secretary Boyle; but though her majesty stated, "she would take an opportunity of complying with their desire," the promise probably escaped her memory, for no further notice was taken of it.

On his impeachment, Sacheverell was taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms, by whom he was delivered over to the usher of the black rod; but he was subsequently admitted to bail, after which a copy of the articles of accusation being delivered to him, he returned an answer denying most of the charges against him, and palliating and extenuating the remainder. The answer was sent by the lords to the commons, and referred by the latter to a committee.

After much deliberation, in which Harley's influence secretly operated, an address was laid before the queen, purporting that "the house could not patiently sit still and see the justice of the late happy Revolution reflected upon; their own decrees treated with contempt; the governors of the church aspersed; toleration exposed as wicked; and

sedition insolently invading the pulpit; and therefore they were under the absolute necessity of bringing the offender to trial." To this address, the queen, acting under advice, gave her assent, and the trial was thereupon appointed to take place on the 27th of February thence ensuing, in Westminster Hall, which was ordered to be fitted up for the reception of the commons.

These proceedings increased the unpopularity of the ministers, while they caused Sacheverell to be universally regarded as a martyr. The anticipated trial, on which the fate of parties was known to hang, formed the entire subject of conversation at all clubs and coffee-houses. The fiercest disputes arose out of these discussions, occasioning frequent duels and nocturnal

encounters; while high-church mobs paraded the streets, shouting forth the doctor's name, and singing songs in his praise, or uttering diatribes against his enemies.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE AFFRONT PUT UPON THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH BY THE QUEEN.

In less than a week after Sacheverell had promulgated his seditious discourse, the Duke of Marlborough appeared at Saint James's, having been hastily summoned from Flanders by Godolphin, who informed him of the menacing aspect of affairs, and assured him that the only chance of safety rested in his presence. The duke's return, which had formerly been hailed by the

loudest cheers and congratulations of the populace, was comparatively unnoticed, and instead of his own name and achievements forming the burthen of their shouts, he was greeted with cries of "Sacheverell and High Church!" The mob had set up a new idol in his absence.

His reception by the queen was cold and constrained, and though professing to be glad to see him, she made no allusion whatever to the recent victory of Malplaquet. The meeting was further embarrassed by the presence of Mrs. Masham.

After some conversation on indifferent matters, Marlborough adverted to the refusal of the appointment, and expressed his resolution of retiring, as soon as he could do so consistently.

"I am sorry your grace should misconstrue my refusal," said Anne; "there

is no precedent for the grant you claim, and I should not be justified in acceding to your request. As regards your retirement, the grief I shall feel at being deprived of your services will be tempered by the enjoyment of a long stranger to my reign—peace."

"I understand your majesty," replied Marlborough, drily. "But even the certainty of misrepresentation shall not compel me to conclude a treaty of peace with Louis, unless upon terms honourable to yourself and advantageous to your subjects."

"What appears advantageous to your grace may not appear equally so to others," remarked Mrs. Masham.

"Possibly not to Mr. Harley and the friends of France," rejoined the duke, sarcastically. "But I will protect the rights of my country, and oppose and confound

its enemies as long as I have the power of doing so."

"You are warm, my lord," said Anne—"needlessly warm."

"Not needlessly, gracious madam, when I find you influenced by pernicious advisers," replied Marlborough. "Oh, that I could exercise the influence I once had over you! Oh, that you would listen to the counsels of your true friend, the duchess, who has your real interests at heart!"

"Her majesty has shaken off her bondage," cried Mrs. Masham.

"To put on another and a worse," rejoined the duke. "She knows not the position in which she stands—she knows not how her honour, her glory, her prosperity are sacrificed at the shrine of an unworthy favourite."

"No more of this, my lord," cried Anne,

peremptorily. "I will not be troubled with these disputes."

"It is no dispute, gracious madam," replied the duke, proudly. "As a faithful and loyal servant of your majesty, and as one ready at all times to lay down his life in your defence, I am bound to represent to you the danger in which you are placed. But I *can* have no quarrel with Mrs. Masham."

"Mrs. Masham respects my feelings, my lord," replied the queen, angrily, "which is more than some of those do who profess so much devotion to me. But it is time these misunderstandings should cease. Can you not see that it is her perpetual interference and dictation that have rendered the duchess odious to me, and have led me to adopt a confidante of more gentle manners? Can you not see that I

will not brook either her control or yours—that I will govern my people as I please,—and fix my affections where I please? No parliament can rob me of a friend; and if your grace should think fit to attempt Mrs. Masham's forcible removal, as you once threatened, you will find your efforts recoil on your own head."

"I have no wish to deprive your majesty of a friend, and certainly none to dictate to you," replied the duke. "But if it is proved to you—publicly proved—that your confidante has betrayed her trust, and been in constant correspondence with the avowed opponent of your majesty's ministers—to say nothing of foreign enemies—if your parliament and people require you to dismiss her, I presume you will not then hesitate?"

"It will be time enough to answer that question, my lord, when such a decision has

been pronounced," said the queen. "I presume our conference is at an end?"

"Not quite, your majesty," said the duke. "I must trespass on your patience a moment longer. You are aware that two military appointments have to be made—the lieutenancy of the Tower, and a regiment."

"I am aware of it," replied the queen, with a glance at Mrs. Masham.

"Lord Rivers requested me to use my interest with your majesty to confer the lieutenancy upon him," pursued the duke; "but on my representing to him that my interest was infinitely less than his own, he entreated my permission to make the request of your majesty himself."

"Has your grace any objection to him?" asked the queen.

"None whatever," replied the duke; "but the person I would venture to recom-

mend to the place is the Duke of Northumberland. By giving it to him, your majesty will also be enabled to oblige the Earl of Hertford by the presentation of the Oxford regiment, which Northumberland will resign in his favour—an arrangement which is sure to be highly agreeable to the earl's father, the Duke of Somerset."

"I am sorry I cannot attend to your grace's recommendation," replied the queen. "I have already granted the lieutenancy to Lord Rivers."

"How, madam!" exclaimed Marlborough, starting. "Why, Lord Rivers only left me a few moments before I set out, and I made all haste to the palace."

"He has been here, nevertheless, and has received the appointment," rejoined the queen. "He said your grace had no objection to him."

"This is contrary to all etiquette!" cried the duke, unable to conceal his mortification. "I have never been consulted on the occasion! Your majesty will do well to recall your promise."

"Impossible, my lord," replied Anne. "But since your grace complains of violation of etiquette, I beg to inform you that I wish the vacant regiment to be conferred on Mrs. Masham's brother, Colonel Hill."

"Your majesty!" exclaimed the duke.

"Nay, I *will* have it so!" cried Anne, peremptorily.

"In a matter like the present, involving the consideration of very nice points, your majesty will forgive me if I do not at once assent," replied the duke. "Let me beseech you to reflect upon the prejudice which the appointment of so young an officer as Colonel Hill will occasion to the army,

while others, who have served longer, and have higher claims, must necessarily be passed over. I myself shall be accused of partiality and injustice."

"I will take care you are not misjudged, my lord," returned Anne.

"It will be erecting a standard of disaffection, round which all malcontents will rally," pursued the duke.

"We will hope better things," said the queen.

"As a last appeal, gracious madam," cried the duke, kneeling, "I would remind you of the hardships I have recently undergone—of my long and active services. Do not—oh, do not force this ungracious and injurious order upon me. Though I myself might brook the indignity, yet to make it apparent to the whole world must be prejudicial to yourself as well as to me."

"Rise, my lord," said Anne, coldly. "I have made up my mind on the subject. You will do well to advise with your friends, and when you have consulted with them I shall be glad of an answer."

"You shall have it, madam," replied the duke. And bowing stiffly, he quitted the presence.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHAT GUISE THE SERJEANT RETURNED FROM THE WARS; AND HOW HE BROUGHT BACK A DUTCH WIFE.

THE constancy of Mrs. Plumpton and Mrs. Tipping was severely tried. The campaign of 1707 closed without the serjeant's return; so did that of the following year; and it seemed doubtful whether the winter of 1709 would see him back again. This, it must be confessed, was a long absence, and enough to exhaust the patience of the most

enduring. During the greater part of the time, Scales corresponded regularly with his friends, and sent them graphic descriptions of the sieges of Lille, Tournay, and Mons, as well as of the battles of Oudenard and Malplaquet, at all of which he had been present.

Bimbelot and Sauvageon had been constant in their attendance upon the ladies, and though the corporal's suit could not be said to advance, the valet flattered himself that he had made a favourable impression upon the heart of the lady's maid. How far he might have succeeded, and whether he might have possessed himself of the hand of the too susceptible Mrs. Tipping, it is needless to inquire. Suffice it to say, that she was so well watched by Proddy, who guarded her like a dragon, that she had no opportunity of throwing herself away.

It may be remembered, that on the last occasion when Bimbelot was brought on the scene, he was locked up in a cupboard by the coachman, and it may be as well here to give the sequel of the adventure.

For some time the valet remained unconscious that he was a prisoner, not having heard Proddy's manœuvre; but at length, fancying all still, he tried to get out, and, to his dismay, found the means of egress barred against him. While in a state of great anxiety at his situation, he was somewhat relieved by the approach of footsteps, and presently distinguished the voice of Mrs. Tipping, who, in a low tone, inquired, "Are you there?"

"Oui, ma chère, I'm here, and here I'm likely to remain, unless you let me out;" he replied.

"Why, the key's gone!" cried Mrs.

Tipping. "I can't open the door. What's to be done?"

"Diable!" roared Bimbelot. "Je mourirai de faim—je serai suffoqué. Oh, mon Dieu! Vat shall I do?—ha!"

And in turning about, he upset a large pile of china plates, which fell to the ground with a tremendous clatter.

Mrs. Tipping instantly took to her heels, while, alarmed by the noise, Fishwick, Brumby, Parker, and Timperley, who had retired to a small room adjoining the kitchen to smoke a pipe and regale themselves with a mug of ale previous to retiring to rest, immediately rushed into the passage.

"What the deuce is the matter?" cried Fishwick. "Somebody must be breaking into the house."

"The noise came from the china closet," said Brumby. "A cat must have got into it."

"More likely a rat," said Parker; "but whatever it is, we'll ferret it out. Holloa! the key's gone! I'm sure I saw it in the door to-night."

"This convinces me we've a house-breaker to deal with," said Timperley. "He has taken out the key, and locked himself in the closet."

"Maybe," said Brumby. "But let's break open the door—I'm sure I hear a noise."

"So do I," rejoined Parker.

At this instant there was another crash of china, followed by an imprecation in the French tongue.

"Run to the kitchen, Timperley; fetch the musket, and the pistols, and the sword," cried Fishwick. "We'll exterminate the villain when we get at him. I've got a key which will unlock the door. Quick—quick!"

"Ce n'est pas un larron, mes amis—c'est moi—c'est Bimbelot!" cried the Frenchman. "Don't you know me?"

"Why, it sounds like Bamby's voice," cried Fishwick.

"Oui, oui, c'est Bimbelot!" replied the prisoner.

"Why, what the devil are you doing there, Bamby?" demanded the cook.

"I got lock up by accident," replied the valet. "Open de door, I beseesh of you."

At this reply there was a general roar of laughter from the group outside, which was not diminished when, the door being opened by Fishwick, the valet sneaked forth.

Without waiting to thank his deliverers, or to afford them any explanation of the cause of his captivity, Bimbelot took to his heels and hurried out of the house. Their surmises, which were not very far wide of

the truth, were fully confirmed on the following day by Proddy.

It has been said that Scales wrote home frequently, but after the battle of Malplaquet, which he described with great particularity, nothing was heard from him, and as this despatch was evidently traced by the hand of a comrade, it was feared, though no mention was made of it, that the serjeant had been wounded.

"Well, I hold to my resolution," said Mrs. Tipping. "If he has lost a limb, I wont have him."

"I don't care what he has lost," said Mrs. Plumpton, "he will be all the same to me."

"I hope he'll come back safe and sound," said Proddy, "and soon, too. I'm sure he has been away long enough."

The campaign of 1709 was over, but yet no serjeant returned. Great was the con-

sternation of the two ladies. Mrs. Tipping had a fit of hysterics, and Mrs. Plumpton fainted clean away. Both, however, were restored, not only to themselves, but to the highest possible state of glee, by a piece of intelligence brought them by Fishwick, who had ascertained from the very best authority,—namely, the duke himself,—that the serjeant was on his way home, and might be hourly expected.

Shortly after this, Proddy made his appearance, wearing a mysterious expression of countenance, which was very tantalizing. He had received a letter from the serjeant, and the ladies entreated him to let them see it; but he shook his head, saying, "You'll know it all in time."

"Know what?" demanded Mrs. Tipping. "What *has* happened?"

"Something very dreadful," replied

Proddy, evasively; "so prepare yourselves."

"Oh, good gracious! how you alarm one!" exclaimed Mrs. Tipping. "He hasn't had a leg shot off?"

"Worse than that," replied Proddy.

"Worse than that!" repeated Mrs. Tipping. "Impossible! Nothing can be worse. Speak—speak! or I shall go distracted."

"Why he has lost his right leg and his right arm, and I don't know whether his right eye aint a-missin', too," replied the coachman.

"Then he's no longer the man for me," replied Mrs. Tipping.

"I'm glad to have such an opportunity of proving my affection for him," said Mrs. Plumpton, brushing away a tear. "I shall like him just as well as ever—perhaps better."

The Serjeant introducing his Dutch wife to his friends.

"Well, upon my word, Plumpton, you're easily satisfied, I must say," observed Mrs. Tipping, scornfully. "I wish you joy of your bargain."

"Ah! but Mrs. Plumpton don't know all," remarked Proddy; "the worst's behind."

"What! is there anything more dreadful in store?" asked the housekeeper. "What is it?—what is it?"

"I was enjoined by the serjeant not to tell—but I can't help it," replied Proddy. "He's MARRIED!"

"Married!" screamed both ladies.

"Yes—married!" replied Proddy, "to a Dutch woman, and he's bringin' her home with him."

"Well, I hope he wont let me see her, or I'll tear her eyes out—that I will!" cried

Mrs. Tipping. "Bless us! what's the matter with Plumpton? Why, if the poor fool isn't going to faint."

And her womanly feelings getting the better of her rivalry, she flew to the housekeeper, and tried to revive her by sprinkling water over her face.

"This is real love, or I know nothing about it," said Proddy, regarding Mrs. Plumpton, who had fallen into a chair, with much concern. "I wish I hadn't alarmed her so."

And without awaiting her recovery, he quitted the house.

On that same evening, Bimbelot called upon the ladies, and was enchanted by the news which he learnt from Mrs. Tipping.

"Ma foi!" he exclaimed, "here's a pretty conclusion to de sergent's gallant career. So he has lose a leg, and an arm,

and an eye, and is marry to a Dush vrow—ha, ha! You say he is hourly expect. I sall call to-morrow evening, and see if he is return."

So the next evening he came, accompanied by Sauvageon, and found the two ladies and Fishwick in the kitchen; but as yet nothing had been heard of the serjeant, nor had even Proddy made his appearance. Mrs. Plumpton seemed very disconsolate, sighed dismally, and often applied her apron to her eyes; and though Mrs. Tipping endeavoured to look indifferent and scornful, it was evident she was quite the reverse of comfortable.

"I hope you'll revenge yourself on de perfidious sergent, ma chère," said Bimbelot to the latter; "let him see dat if he have got a Dush wife, you can mash him wid a French husband—ha, ha!"

"It would serve him right, indeed," replied the lady. "I'll see."

Sauvageon addressed a speech somewhat to the same purport to Mrs. Plumpton, but the only response he received was a melancholy shake of the head.

Just at this juncture, an odd sound, like the stumping of a wooden leg, was heard in the passage, approaching each instant towards the door.

"Sacre Dieu! vat's dat?" cried Bimbelot.

"It's the serjeant!" cried Mrs. Plumpton, starting up. "I'm sure it's the serjeant."

As she spoke, the door opened, and there stood Scales, but how miserably changed from his former self! His right arm was supported by a sling, and what appeared the stump of a hand was wrapped in a bandage.

A wooden leg lent him support on one side, and a long crutch on the other. His visage was wan and woe-begone, and his appearance so touched Mrs. Plumpton, that she would certainly have rushed up to him and thrown her arms about his neck, if she had not caught sight of a female figure close behind him.

After pausing for a moment in the doorway, and taking off his hat to his friends, Scales hobbled forward. He was followed by his partner, and a thrill of astonishment pervaded Mrs. Plumpton as she beheld more fully the object of his choice.

Never was such a creature seen, nor one so totally repugnant to the received notions of feminine attraction. Mrs. Scales was little more than half her husband's size; but what she wanted in height she made up in width and rotundity, and if she were a

Dutch Venus, the Hollanders must admire the same breadth of outline as the Hottentots. Her expansive attractions were displayed in a flaming petticoat of scarlet cloth, over which she wore a short gown of yellow brocade worked with gold, and over this a richly-laced muslin apron. Her stupendous stomacher was worked in the same gaudy style as her gown; immense lace ruffles covered her elbows; and black mittens her wrists. Her neck was so short that her chin was buried in her exuberant bust. Waist she had none. In fact, her figure altogether resembled an enormous keg of Dutch butter, or gigantic runnel of Schiedam. The rest of her array consisted of massive gold earrings, a laced cap and pinners, surmounted by a beaver hat with a low crown and broad leaves; black shoes of Spanish leather, with red heels, and buckles.

In her hand she carried a large fan, which she spread before her face, it may be presumed to hide her blushes.

As she advanced with her heels together, and her toes turned out, at a slow and mincing pace, the two Frenchmen burst into roars of laughter, and having made her a bow of mock ceremony, which she returned by a little duck of the body, intended for a courtesy, they retired to let her pass, and to indulge their merriment unrestrained.

"What a creature!" exclaimed Mrs. Tipping, tossing her head scornfully, and arranging her pinners; "what an ojus creature! I shan't speak to her."

"I suppose I must, though," sighed good-natured Mrs. Plumpton. "Oh, that it should come to this, after all his promises and fair speeches!"

"She's no great beauty, it must be owned," said Fishwick, crossing his hands over his paunch, and examining the Dutch lady at his leisure.

By this time, the serjeant had drawn near the group. His countenance grew more rueful each moment, and he had to clear his throat to bring out the words, "Allow me to introduce you to Mrs. Scales. Katryn, myn lief—Mrs. Plumpton."

As the introduction took place, the fat little lady made another ducking courtesy, and lowering her fan at the same time, discovered a broad puffy face covered with patches, a large double chin, a snub nose, and round protruding eyes. She was so very, very plain, that Mrs. Plumpton stood aghast, and stopped midway in her courtesy as if petrified.

"Ah! diable, comme elle est laide!" cried

Bimbelot. "J'ai un grand envi du bonheur de notre vaillant sergent—ha, ha!"

"Et moi aussi," laughed Sauvageon. "Sa femme est seduisante comme un tonneau de graisse."

"My wife speaks English very well, Mrs. Plumpton," said Scales. "She will be happy to converse with you."

"Yas, I sbege Englesch bery bell, Mrs. Blumbdon," said the Dutch lady.

"What do you think of her?" demanded Scales. "She's accounted a great beauty in her own country. She was called 'De Vat Haring van den Haag,' or the Bloater of the Hague, which was esteemed a great compliment in that place."

"Yas, I'm taut a grade beaudy in my own coundry," simpered Mrs. Scales.

"There's no accounting for tastes," muttered Mrs. Plumpton. "But do you know,

serjeant," she added, aloud, "I think your wife very like Mr. Proddy—so like, that I should almost have fancied she might be his sister."

"Vat does she say?" demanded Mrs. Scales, agitating her fan.

"She says you're very like a respected friend of mine—one Mr. Proddy, the queen's coachman," replied Scales.

"Oh, Mynheer Protty; I've heard you spege of him before," replied his wife. "He musd be a bery gootlooging man, dat Protty, if he's lige me."

"He *is* very goodlooking," affirmed Scales. "You'll see him by and by, I dare say."

"Oh yes, he's sure to be here presently," said Fishwick. "I wonder he hasn't come before this. Odsbobs! she is uncommonly like Proddy, to be sure!"

"Wont you allow me to present my wife to you, Mrs. Tipping?" said Scales.

"No, I thank'ee, serjeant," replied the lady, glancing scornfully over her shoulder. "Horrid wretch!" she added, as if to herself.

"Well, at all events, you may shake hands with me," said Scales.

"You've only one hand left, serjeant, and it would be a pity to use it unnecessarily," rejoined Mrs. Tipping, pertly.

"Well, I didn't expect such a reception as this," said Scales, dolefully. "I thought you would be glad to see me."

"So we should, if you had come back as you went," replied Mrs. Tipping; "but you're an altered man now. I always told you, if you lost a limb, I'd have nothing to say to you."

"Your wounds would have made no difference to me, serjeant, if you hadn't put a

bar between us," said Mrs. Plumpton. "Oh, dear! you've used me very cruelly!"

"Hush! not so loud," cried the serjeant, winking, and pointing at his spouse.

"Vat's dat you zay, madam?" demanded Mrs. Scales. "I hope de serjeant hasn't been maagin luv to you."

"Yes, but he has," cried Mrs. Tipping; "he made love to both of us, and he promised to marry both of us, and he *would* have married both of us, but for you, you old Dutch monster!"

"Is dis drue, madam?" cried Mrs. Scales, her face turning crimson. "I'll believe you, but I wond dat saacy slud."

"Barbarous as he is, I wont betray him," murmured Mrs. Plumpton, turning away.

"If you wont believe me, you old mermaid, ask those gentlemen," said Mrs. Tipping. "They'll confirm what I've stated."

"Oui, madame," replied Bimbelot, stepping forward, "je suis bien faché—sorry to tell you dat de sergent did make love to bote dese ladies."

"Silence, Bamby!" cried Scales.

"No, I shan't be silent at your bidding," rejoined the valet. "We laugh at your threats now—ha! ha!" And he snapped his fingers in the serjeant's face.

"Yes, yes, we laugh at you now," said Sauvageon, imitating the gesture of his companion.

"Cowards!" exclaimed Scales.

"Whom do you call cowards, sare?" demanded Bimbelot, striding up to him, and grinning fiercely.

"Yes, whom do you call cowards, sare?" added Sauvageon, stepping forward, and grinning on the other side.

"Both; I call you both cowards—arrant

cowards!" replied Scales. "You wouldn't dare to do this, for your lives, if I weren't disabled."

The Frenchmen meditated some angry retort, but Mrs. Scales pushed them aside, crying, "Leave him to me. I've an account to seddle wid him. Give me back my gilders, zir. I'll be divorzed. I'll go bag to Holland. I'll leave you wid your fine mizzizes here."

"We'll have nothing to do with him," said Mrs. Tipping.

"Answer for yourself, Tipping," rejoined Mrs. Plumpton. "I can forgive him anything."

"Bless you! bless you!" cried the serjeant, in a voice of deep emotion, and wiping away a tear.

"Give me my gilders, I zay," cried Mrs. Scales, rapping him with her fan. "I've done wid you. I'll go bag."

"Yas, give de lady her money," cried Bimbelot, coming behind him, and trying to trip up his wooden leg. "Ah, ah! mon brave, you are prettily hen-peck—ha! ha!"

"Oui, oui, de gray mare is clearly de better horse," cried Sauvageon, trying to knock the crutch from beneath his arm.

"Ah! rascals—ah, cowards! I'll teach you to play these tricks!" roared the serjeant in a voice of thunder, and shaking them off with a force that astonished them.

But what was their terror and amazement to see him slip his right arm out of the sling, pull off the bandage and produce a hand beneath it, sound and uninjured, and hard and horny as the other. What was their surprise—and the surprise of every one else, except Mrs. Scales—to see him unbuckle a strap behind, cast off his wooden leg, and plant his right foot firmly on the ground, giving a great stamp as he did so!

"Can I believe my eyes!" cried Mrs. Plumpton; "why the serjeant is himself again."

"Milles tonneres!" exclaimed Bimbelot, in affright—"que signifie cela?"

"It signifies that a day of retribution is arrived for you, rascal!" replied Scales, attacking him about the back and legs with the crutch. "This will teach you to waylay people in the park. And you too," he added, belabouring Sauvageon in the same manner—"how do you like that, eh, rascals—eh, traitors!"

And he pursued them round the room, while Mrs. Scales assisted him, kicking them as they fled before her, and displaying, in her exertions, a tremendous pair of calves. She had just caught hold of the tails of Bimbelot's coat, and was cuffing him soundly, when he jerked himself away from her,

and pulled her to the ground. In falling, her hat and cap, together with a false head of hair, came off.

"Another miracle!" exclaimed Mrs. Plumpton, running up to her assistance. "Why, I declare, if it isn't Mr. Proddy after all!"

"Yes, yes, it's me, sure enough," replied the coachman, getting up—"ha, ha! Oh dear, these stays are sadly too tight for me. I shall be squeezed to death—ho! ho!"

At this moment, the serjeant, having driven out both the Frenchmen, came back, and, clasping the unresisting Mrs. Plumpton in his arms, bestowed a hearty smack upon her lips.

"You'll forgive me for putting your affection to this trial, I hope, my dear?" he said.

"That I will," replied Mrs. Plumpton—"that I will."

"I'll forgive you, too, serjeant," said Mrs. Tipping, nudging his elbow, "though you don't deserve it."

Without saying a word, Scales turned and clasped her to his breast. But the embrace was certainly not so hearty as that which he had just bestowed on the housekeeper.

"Well, I hope you've taken care of my room in my absence?" said Scales.

"Come and look at it," cried Mrs. Plumpton; "you'll find it just as you left it."

"Yes, come and look at it," added Mrs. Tipping; "we've cleaned it regularly."

"Thank'ee, thank'ee!" rejoined the serjeant.

"Your drum's as tightly braced as my bodice," said Proddy. "Oh dear! I wish somebody would unlace me."

The coachman being relieved, they all

adjourned to the den, and as they went thither, Scales observed to Mrs. Plumpton that he should never forget the way in which she had received him, saying, "It had made an ineffaceable impression on his heart."

"Ineffaceable fiddlestick!" exclaimed Mrs. Tipping, who overheard the remark. "As if she didn't know you were shamming all the while. Why, bless your simplicity, serjeant, did you think you could impose on us by so shallow a device? No such thing. We saw through it the moment you came in."

The serjeant looked incredulous, but at this moment he reached the den, and his thoughts turned into another channel.

Hesitating for a second, with a somewhat trembling hand, he opened the door, and passed in. Everything was in its place—the plans, the portrait, the gloves, the sword, the shot, the meerschaum, with the drum

standing on the three-legged stool. The serjeant surveyed them all, and a tear glistened in his eye. He said nothing, but squeezed Mrs. Plumpton's hand affectionately.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRIAL OF DOCTOR SACHEVERELL.

THE length of time that elapsed between Doctor Sacheverell's impeachment and his trial was so far favourable to him, inasmuch as it gave him ample opportunity for preparing his defence; while no art was neglected to propitiate the public in his behalf, and heighten the feeling of animosity already entertained against his opponents.

The doctor's portrait was exhibited in all the print-shops; ballads were sung about

him at the corner of every street; reference was constantly made to his case by the clergy of his party in their sermons, and some even went so far as to offer up public prayers "for the deliverance of a brother under persecution from the hands of his enemies;" the imminent peril of the church, and the excellence of its constitution, were insisted on; the most furious zealots were made welcome guests at the board of Harley and his friends, and instructed how to act—the principal toast at all such entertainments being "Doctor Sacheverell's health, and a happy deliverance to him."

The aspect of things was so alarming, that long before the trial came on, the greatest misgivings were felt as to its issue by the Whig leaders, and Godolphin bitterly repented that he had not listened to the advice of Lord Somers, who had recom-

mended a simple prosecution in a court of law as the safest and most judicious course. But retreat was now too late. The task had been undertaken, and however difficult and dangerous, it must be gone through with. To quit the field without a struggle would be worse than defeat.

Warmly attached to the church, and led by Harley and Abigail to believe that it was really in danger, the queen was inclined from the first towards Sacheverell, and this bias was confirmed by the incautious admission on the part of the Whigs of the legitimacy of her brother, the Prince of Wales—an admission which, coupled with her dislike of the proposed Hanoverian succession, exasperated her against them, and increased her predilection for one whom she believed to be undergoing persecution for promulgating opinions so entirely in accordance

with her own. Additional confidence was given to the Tories, by the defection from the opposite party of the Dukes of Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Argyle, all of whom, either secretly or openly, exerted themselves to throw difficulties in the way of the impeachment.

Thus embarrassed, and with the tide of popular opinion running strongly against them, it became evident to the instigators of the trial, that whatever might be the decision as regarded Sacheverell, its consequences must be prejudicial in the highest degree to themselves. The only person who seemed unconcerned, and confident of a favourable termination, was the Duchess of Marlborough.

The counsel for the defence included Sir Simon Harcourt, Sir Constantine Phipps, and three others of the ablest Tory lawyers;

while advice was given on all theological matters by Doctors Atterbury, Smalridge, and Friend. The managers of the prosecution comprehended Sir John Holland, comptroller of the household; Mr. Secretary Boyle; Mr. Smith, chancellor of the exchequer; Sir James Montague, attorney-general; Mr. Robert Eyre, solicitor-general; Mr. Robert Walpole, treasurer of the navy; and thirteen others.

The approach of the trial increased the public curiosity to the highest pitch, and all other considerations of business or amusement were merged in the anticipation of a struggle, which, though ostensibly for another cause, was to decide the fate of parties.

At length, the 27th of February—the day fixed for the trial—arrived. About an hour before noon, the courts and squares of

the Temple, where Sacheverell lodged, to be near his lawyers, were crowded by an immense mob, with oak-leaves in their hats —the distinguishing badge of the high-church party. A tremendous shout was raised as the doctor got into an open gilt chariot, lent him for the occasion by a friend, and as it was put in motion, the whole concourse marched with him, shouting and singing, and giving to the procession rather the semblance of a conqueror's triumph, than of the passage of an offender to a court of justice.

The windows of all the houses in the Strand and Parliament-street were filled with spectators, many of whom responded to the shouts of the mob, while the fairer, and not the least numerous portion of the assemblage, were equally enthusiastic in the expression of their good wishes.

Sacheverell, it has before been intimated, was a handsome, fresh-complexioned man, with a fine portly figure, and stately presence, and on the present occasion, being attired in his full canonicals, and with the utmost care, he looked remarkably well. His countenance was clothed with smiles, as if he were assured of success.

In this way he was brought to Westminster Hall.

The managers and committee of the commons having taken their places, Sacheverell was brought to the bar, when the proceedings were opened by the attorney-general, who was followed by Mr. Lechmere; after which the particular passages of the sermon on which the impeachment was grounded, were read.

The case, however, proceeded no further on this day, but the court being adjourned,

the doctor was conducted back to the Temple by the same concourse who had attended him to Westminster Hall, and who had patiently awaited his coming forth.

The next day, the crowds were far more numerous than before, and the approaches to the place of trial were so closely beset, that it required the utmost efforts of the guard to maintain anything like a show of order. Groanings, hootings, and menaces, were lavishly bestowed on all the opponents of Sacheverell, while, on the contrary, his friends were welcomed with the loudest cheers.

It was expected that the queen would attend the trial, and a little before twelve, a passage was cleared for the royal carriage; notwithstanding which, the vehicle proceeded very slowly, and when nearly opposite Whitehall, a stoppage occurred. Taking

advantage of the pause, several persons pressed up to the window, and said, "We hope your majesty is for Doctor Sacheverell."

Somewhat alarmed, Anne leaned back, but Mrs. Masham, who was with her, answered quickly, "Yes, yes, good people, her majesty is a friend of every true friend of the church, and an enemy of its persecutors."

"We knew it—we knew it!" rejoined the questioners. "God bless your majesty, and deliver you from evil counsellors! Sacheverell and high church—huzza!'

"I say, coachee," cried one of the foremost of the mob—a great ruffianly fellow, half a head taller than the rest of the bystanders, with a ragged green coat on his back, and a coal-black beard of a week's growth on his chin—"I say, coachee," he cried, addressing Proddy, who occupied his

usual position on the box, "I hope you're high church?"

"High as a steeple, my weathercock," replied Proddy. "You've little in common with low church yourself, I guess?"

"Nothin'," returned the man, gruffly. "But since such are your sentiments, give the words — 'Sacheverell for ever! and down with the Duke of Marlborough!'"

"I've no objection to Doctor Sacheverell," said Proddy; "but I'm blown if I utter a word against the Duke of Marlborough; nor shall any one else in my hearin'. So stand aside, my maypole, unless you want a taste of the whip. Out of the way there! Ya hip—yo ho!"

Scarcely had the royal carriage passed, than the Duchess of Marlborough came up. Her grace was alone in her chariot, and being instantly recognised, was greeted with

groans and yells by the crowd. No change of feature proclaimed a consciousness on her part of this disgraceful treatment, until the tall man before mentioned approached the carriage, and thrust his head insolently into the window.

"Good day, duchess," he said, touching his hat, and leering impudently—"you wont refuse us a few crowns to drink Doctor Sacheverell's health, and the downfall of the Whigs, eh?"

"Back, ruffian!" she cried; "drive on, coachman."

"Not so quick, duchess," replied the fellow, with a coarse laugh.

And turning to two men near him, almost as ill-looking and stalwart as himself, he added, "here, Dan Dammaree,—and you, Frank Willis,—to the horses' heads—quick!"

The command was so promptly obeyed, that before Brumby could apply the whip, the horses were checked.

"You see how it is, duchess," pursued the fellow, with a detestable grin, "we must have what we ask, or we shall be compelled to escort you back to Marlborough House."

This speech was received with cheers and laughter by the bystanders, and several voices exclaimed, "Ay—ay, Geordie Purchase is right. We must have wherewithal to drink the doctor's deliverance, or the carriage shall go back."

Purchase was about to renew his demand, and in yet more insolent terms, when a strong grasp was placed on his collar, and he was hurled forcibly backwards, among the crowd.

On recovering himself, he saw that he had been displaced by a tall man in a ser-

jeant's uniform, who now stood before the carriage window, and regarded him and his friends menacingly.

"Down with him!" roared Purchase; "he's a Whig—a dissenter—down with him!"

"Ay, down with him!" echoed a hundred voices.

And the threat would no doubt have been carried into execution, if at this juncture, a body of the horse-guards had not ridden up, their captain having perceived that the Duchess of Marlborough was molested in her progress. The men then quitted their hold of the horses' heads, and Brumby putting the carriage in motion, the serjeant sprang up behind it among the footmen, and was borne away.

A few minutes after this disturbance, loud and prolonged cheering proclaimed the

approach of the idol of the mob. Sacheverell was attended, as before, by a vast retinue of admirers, who carried their hats, decorated with oak-leaves, at the end of truncheons, which they waved as they marched along.

As the chariot advanced, the beholders instantly uncovered to the doctor, and those who refused this mark of respect had their hats knocked off. Sacheverell was accompanied by Doctors Atterbury and Smallridge, who were occupied in examining certain packets which had been flung into the carriage by different ladies, as it passed along, and the contents of most of which proved to be valuable.

When the carriage reached Whitehall, the shouts were almost deafening, and hundreds pressed round the doctor, invoking blessings on his head, and praying for his

benediction in return. This was readily accorded by Sacheverell, who, rising in the carriage, extended his hands over the multitude, crying out, with great apparent fervour—"Heaven bless you, my brethren! and preserve you from the snares of your enemies!"

"And you too, doctor," cried the rough voice of Purchase, who was standing near him. "We'll let your persecutors see to-night what they may expect from us if they dare to find you guilty."

"Ay, that we will," responded others.

"We'll begin by burnin' down the meetin'-houses," shouted Daniel Dammaree. "The Whigs shall have a bonfire to warm their choppy fingers at."

"Say the word, doctor, and we'll pull down the Bishop o' Salisbury's house," roared Frank Willis.

"Or the lord chancellor's," cried Purchase.

"Or Jack Dolben's,—he who moved for your reverence's impeachment," cried Daniel Dammaree.

At the mention of Mr. Dolben's name, a deep groan broke from the crowd.

"Shall we set fire to Mr. Hoadley's church—Saint Peter's Poor, eh, doctor?" said Purchase.

"On no account, my friends—my worthy friends," replied Sacheverell. "Abstain from all acts of violence, I implore of you. Otherwise you will injure the cause you profess to serve."

"But, doctor, we can't come out for nothing," urged Purchase.

"No, no, we must earn a livelihood," said Willis.

"I charge you to be peaceable," rejoined

the doctor, sitting down hastily in the carriage.

"Notwithstanding what he says, we'll pull down Dr. Burgess's meetin'-house in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, to-night," cried Dammaree, as the carriage was driven forward.

"Right," cried a little man, with his hat pulled over his brows; "it will convince the enemies of the high church that we're in earnest. The doctor may talk as he pleases, but I know a tumult will be agreeable to him, as well as serviceable."

"Say you so," cried Purchase; "then we'll do it. We meet at seven in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, comrades."

"Agreed," cried a hundred voices.

"And don't forget to bring your clubs with you, comrades," cried Frank Willis.

"That we wont," replied the others.

"I must keep them up to it," muttered the short man, with the hat pulled over his brows. "This will be pleasing intelligence to Mr. Harley."

The proceedings at Westminster Hall were opened by Sir Joseph Jekyll, who, addressing himself to the first article of the impeachment, was followed by the attorney-general, Sir John Holland, Mr. Walpole, and General Stanhope, the latter of whom, in a spirited speech, declared that if "that insignificant tool of a party, Doctor Sacheverell, had delivered his sermon in a conventicle of disaffected persons, maintained by some deluded women, no notice should have been taken of so nonsensical a discourse; but as he had preached it where it might do great mischief, his offence deserved the severest animadversion."

At these scornful remarks, the doctor,

who had maintained an unconcerned demeanour during the speeches of the other managers, turned very pale, and with difficulty refrained from giving utterance to his angry emotion.

Soon after this, Mr. Dolben spoke, and, in the heat of his discourse, glancing at Atterbury and Smallridge, who were standing at the bar behind Sacheverell, cried—"When I see before me these false brethren——"

The words were scarcely uttered, when Lord Haversham rose, and interrupted him.

"I cannot allow such an expression to pass without reproof, sir," cried his lordship. "You have passed a reflection upon the whole body of the clergy. I move, my lords, that the honourable gentleman explain."

"Ay, ay, explain," cried several voices from the benches of the lords.

"What mean you by the expression you have used, sir?" demanded the chancellor.

"Nothing, my lord," replied Mr. Dolben. "It was a mere inadvertence. I should have said 'false brother,' for I referred only to the prisoner at the bar."

"The explanation is scarcely satisfactory," replied Lord Haversham; "and I must admonish the honourable gentleman to be more guarded in what he says in future. Such slips of the tongue are unpardonable."

Slight as this occurrence was, it was turned to great advantage by Sacheverell's partisans, who construed it into a complete betrayal of the intentions of their opponents to attack the whole church in his person.

When Mr. Dolben concluded his speech, the court adjourned, and the doctor was conducted to his lodgings in the same triumphant manner as before.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE MEETING-HOUSES WERE DESTROYED BY THE MOB.

As evening drew in, the peaceable inhabitants of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields were terrified by the appearance of several hundred persons, armed with bludgeons, muskets, and swords, and headed by three tall men with faces blackened with soot, who, after parading their wild retinue about the square for a quarter of an hour, during which its numbers were greatly increased, paused

beneath a lamp-post, when the tallest of the trio, clambering up it, took upon him to address a few words to the mob. As he ceased, shouts were raised of "Well said, Geordie Purchase. Down with the meeting-houses! Down with the meeting-houses!"

"Ay, down with them!" rejoined Purchase. "Let's begin with Doctor Burgess's; it's the nearest at hand. Come on, lads. We'll have all the meeting-houses down before morning. Come on, I say. High church and Sacheverell for ever—huzza!"

With this, he leaped down, and brandishing a naked hanger, ran towards the corner of the square, and entered a little court, at the end of which stood the doomed meeting-house.

Several of the mob who followed him bore links, so that a wild, unsteady light was thrown upon the scene. An attack was

instantly made upon the door, which proved strong enough to resist the combined efforts of Purchase and Dammaree.

While these ruffians were hurling themselves against it, and calling for implements to burst it open, a window was unfastened, and a venerable face appeared at the opening.

"What do you want, my friends?" asked the looker-out, in a mild voice.

"It's Doctor Burgess himself!" cried several voices. And a most terrific yell was raised, which seemed to find an echo from the furthest part of the square.

"We want to get in, old Poundtext," replied Purchase; "so unlock the door, and look quick about it, or it'll be worse for you."

"Your errand is wrongful," cried Doctor Burgess. "I beseech you to retire, and

take away those you have brought with you. I shall resist your violence as long as I can; nor shall you enter this sacred place except over my body."

"Your blood be upon your own head, then," rejoined Purchase, fiercely. "Curse ye!" he added to those behind him. "Is there nothing to break open the door?"

"Here's a sledge-hammer," cried a swarthy-visaged knave, with his shirt sleeves turned up above the elbow, and a leathern apron tied round his waist, forcing his way towards him. Purchase snatched the hammer from him, raised it, and dashed it against the door, which flew open with a tremendous crash.

But the entrance of the intruders was opposed by Doctor Burgess, who planted himself in their way, and raising his arm menacingly, cried, "Get hence, sacri-

legious villains, or dread the anger of Heaven!"

"We are the servants of the church, and therefore under the special protection of Heaven," cried Purchase, derisively. "Let us pass, I say, or I'll cut you down."

"You shall never pass while I can hinder you," rejoined Doctor Burgess. "I have not much force of body; but such as I have I will oppose to you, violent man."

"Since you wont be warned, you hoary-headed dotard, take your fate!" cried Purchase, seizing him by the throat, and dashing him backwards so forcibly, that his head came in contact with the edge of a pew, and he lay senseless and bleeding on the ground.

As the doctor fell, a young man, who had not been hitherto noticed, rushed forward, crying, in a voice of agony and grief, "Wretches, you have killed him!"

"Maybe we have," rejoined Dammaree, with a terrible imprecation; "and we'll kill you, too, if you give us any nonsense."

"You are he who did it!" cried the young man, attempting to seize Purchase. "You are my prisoner."

"Leave go, fool!" rejoined the other, "or I'll send you to hell to join your pastor."

But the young man closed with him, and, nerved by desperation, succeeded, notwithstanding the other's superior strength, in wresting the hanger from him.

"Halloa, Dan!" cried Purchase, "just give this madcap a crack on the sconce, will you?"

Dammaree replied with a blow from a hatchet which he held in his hand. The young man instantly dropped, and the crowd rushing over him, trampled him beneath their feet.

In another minute, the chapel was filled by the rioters, and the work of destruction commenced. The pews were broken to pieces; the benches torn up; the curtains plucked from the windows; the lamps and sconces pulled down; the casements and wainscots destroyed; the cushions, hassocks, and carpets, taken up; and Bibles and hymn-books torn in pieces, and their leaves scattered about.

By this time, Doctor Burgess, who had only been stunned, having recovered his senses, rushed amidst the crowd, exclaiming — "Sacrilegious villains — robbers — murderers, what have you done with my nephew? Where is he?"

"Silence, old man! We have had trouble enough with you already," rejoined Frank Willis, gruffly.

"Make him mount the pulpit, and cry, 'Sacheverell for ever!'" said Dammaree.

"I will perish rather," cried Doctor Burgess.

"We'll see that," said Purchase. "Here, lads, hoist him to the pulpit."

And amid blows, curses, and the most brutal usage, the unfortunate minister was compelled to mount the steps.

As he stood within the pulpit, from which he was wont to address an assemblage so utterly different in character from that now gathered before him, his appearance excited some commiseration even among that ruthless crew. His face was deathly pale, and there was a large gash on his left temple, from which the blood was still flowing freely. His neckcloth and dress were stained with the sanguinary stream. He

exhibited no alarm, but turning his eyes upwards, seemed to murmur a prayer.

"Now then, doctor," roared Dammaree—"'Sacheverell and High Church for ever,' or the Lord have mercy on your soul."

"The Lord have mercy on *your* soul, misguided man," replied Doctor Burgess. "You will think on your present wicked actions when you are brought to the gallows."

"Do as you are bid, doctor, without more ado," cried Dammaree, pointing a musket at him, "or——"

"I will never belie my conscience," rejoined Doctor Burgess, firmly. "And I warn you not to commit more crimes—not to stain your soul yet more deeply in blood."

Dammaree was about to pull the trigger when the musket was dashed from his grasp by Purchase.

"No, curse it!" cried the milder ruffian, "we wont kill him. He is punished severely enough in seeing his chapel demolished."

The majority of the assemblage concurring in this opinion, Purchase continued — "Come down, old Poundtext, and make your way hence, if you don't wish, like a certain Samson, of your acquaintance, to have an old house pulled about your ears."

"God forgive you as I do," said Burgess, meekly. With this he descended, and pressing through the crowd, quitted the chapel.

Before he was gone, however, the pulpit was battered to pieces and the fragments gathered together, and in a few minutes more the chapel was completely gutted by the mob.

Laden with their spoil, the victors re-

turned to the centre of the square, where they made an immense heap of the broken pieces of the pews and pulpit, and having placed straw and other combustibles among them, they set fire to the pile in various places. The dry wood quickly kindled, and blazed up in a bright ruddy flame, illuminating the countenances of the fantastic groups around it, the nearest of whom took hands, and forming a ring, danced round the bonfire, hallooing and screeching like so many Bedlamites.

While this was going forward, Frank Willis, having fastened a window-curtain, which he had brought from the chapel, to the end of a long pole, waved it over his head, dubbing it the "high-church standard," and bidding his followers rally round it.

A council of war was next held among

the ringleaders, and after some discussion, it was resolved to go and demolish Mr. Earle's meeting-house in Long Acre. This design was communicated to the assemblage by Purchase, and received with tumultuous applause.

To Long Acre, accordingly, the majority of the assemblage hied, broke open the doors of the meeting-house in question, stripped it, as they had done Dr. Burgess's, and carried off the materials for another bonfire.

"Where next, comrades?" cried Purchase, ascending a flight of steps. "Where next?"

"To Mr. Bradbury's meeting-house in New-street, Shoe-lane," replied a voice from the crowd.

This place of worship being visited and destroyed, the mob next bent their course

to Leather-lane, where they pulled down Mr. Taylor's chapel; and thence to Blackfriars, where Mr. Wright's meeting-house shared the same fate.

Hitherto, they had encountered little or no opposition, and, flushed with success, they began to meditate yet more formidable enterprises. Arriving at Fleet Bridge, Purchase mounted the stone balustrade, and claimed attention for a moment.

"What say you to going into the city, and destroying the meeting-houses there?" he cried.

"I'm for somthin' better," replied Frank Willis, waving his flag. "I votes as how we pulls down Salter's Hall."

"I'm for a greater booty still," vociferated Dammaree. "Let us break open and rifle the Bank of England. That'll make us all rich for life."

"Ay, ay—the Bank of England—let's rifle it," cried a chorus of voices.

"A glorious suggestion, Frank," returned Purchase. "Come along. Sacheverell and the Bank of England—huzza!"

As they were about to hurry away, a short man, with his hat pulled over his brows, rushed up, almost out of breath, and informed them that the guards were in search of them.

"They've turned into Lincoln's-Inn-Fields," cried the man, "for I myself told their captain you were there. But they'll be here presently."

"We'll give 'em a warm reception when they come," said Purchase, resolutely. "Here lads, throw down all that wooden lumber on the west side of the bridge. Make as great a heap as you can, so as to block up the thoroughfare completely.

Get a barrel of pitch from that 'ere lighter lying in the ditch below—I'll knock out the bottom and set fire to it when we hear 'em comin', and we'll see whether they'll dare to pass the bridge when that's done. Sacheverell and the Bank of England for ever—huzza!"

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHAT WAY THE RIOTERS WERE DISPERSED.

MEANWHILE, intelligence of these tumults had been received at Whitehall, by the Earl of Sunderland, who instantly repaired to Saint James's Palace, and reported to the queen what was going forward, expressing his apprehension of the extent of the riot.

"I am grieved, but not surprised, to hear of the disturbances, my lord," replied Anne. "They are the natural consequence

of the ill-judged proceedings against Doctor Sacheverell."

"But what will your majesty have done?" asked Sunderland. "You will not allow the lives and properties of your subjects to be sacrificed by a lawless mob?"

"Assuredly not, my lord," replied the queen. "Let the horse and foot guards be instantly sent out to disperse them."

"But your majesty's sacred person must not be left undefended at this hour," replied the earl.

"Have no fear for me, my lord," said Anne. "Heaven will be my guard. The mob will do me no injury, and I would show myself to them without uneasiness. Disperse them as I have said, but let the task be executed with as little violence as possible."

Sunderland then returned to the Cock-

pit, where he found the lord chancellor, the Duke of Newcastle, and some other noblemen. After a brief consultation together, Captain Horsey, an exempt, was summoned, and received instructions from the earl to mount immediately, and quell the disturbances.

"I have some scruple in obeying your lordship," replied Horsey, "unless I am relieved. Belonging as I do to the queen's body-guard, I am responsible for any accident that may happen to her majesty."

"It is the queen's express wish that this should be done, sir," cried the earl, hastily.

"That does not relieve me, my lord," replied Horsey, pertinaciously; "and I will not stir, unless I have your authority in writing."

"Here it is, then," said the earl, sitting down, and hurriedly tracing a few lines on

a sheet of paper, which he gave to the captain. "Are you now content?"

"Humph!" exclaimed Horsey, glancing at the order. "This does not specify whether I am to preach to the mob, or fight them, my lord. If I am to preach, I should wish to be accompanied by some better orator than myself. But if I am to fight, why that's my vocation, and I will do my best."

"Zounds, captain," cried the earl, impatiently, "if you are as long in dispersing the mob, as you are in setting forth, you'll give them time to destroy half the churches in London. About the business quickly. Use discretion and judgment, and forbear all violence, except in case of necessity."

Thus exhorted, the captain left the room, and ordering his men to mount, rode in search of the rioters.

As they galloped along the Strand, information was given them of the bonfire in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and they shaped their course in that direction, but on arriving there, they found the fire nearly extinguished, and a pack of boys tossing about the embers.

At the approach of the soldiery, these young ragamuffins took to their heels, but some of them were speedily captured, when intelligence was obtained that the mob, having pulled down three or four other meeting-houses, had moved towards Blackfriars.

On learning this, the captain gave the word to proceed thither at once, and putting spurs to their horses, the troop dashed through Temple Bar, and so along Fleet-street. As they came in sight of the little bridge which then crossed Fleet Ditch, a

bright flame suddenly sprang up, increasing each moment in volume and brilliancy, and revealing, as they drew nearer, a great pile of burning benches, pews, and other matters. Behind was ranged a mighty rabble rout, lining, to a considerable distance, both on the right and left, the opposite bank of the ditch. The ruddy light of the fire glimmered on the arms of the rioters, and shewed the extent of their numbers. It was also reflected on the black and inert waters of the stream at their feet, disclosing here and there a lighter, or other bark, or falling upon the picturesque outline of some old building.

In the centre of the bridge stood Purchase and Dammaree, each with a drawn hanger in one hand, and a pistol in the other, while mounted upon the balustrade,

stood Frank Willis, waving his standard triumphantly over their heads.

Meanwhile, the fire burnt so furiously, as apparently to prevent all chance of the soldiers passing the bridge, and a loud shout was set up by the rabble as Captain Horsey halted in front of it.

A few minutes were spent in reconnoitring, after which a trumpet was blown. Amid the silence produced by this call, Horsey raised himself in his saddle, and called in a loud voice,—"In the queen's name, I command you to disperse, and go peaceably to your homes. All shall be pardoned, except your ringleaders."

To this Purchase answered in an equally loud and derisive tone, "We are loyal subjects ourselves. We will fight to the death for the queen—for the High Church and

Doctor Sacheverell. No Whigs!—no dissenters!"

"Ay, Sacheverell for ever, and confusion to his enemies!" responded the mob.

"Charge them, men," cried Horsey, spurring his horse towards the fire, and endeavouring to force him through it. But the spirited animal swerved and reared, and despite his master's efforts, dashed off in another direction.

With the exception of two or three, the whole troop were equally unsuccessful. Their horses refused to approach the flames; and a shower of brickbats, stones, and missiles increased the general disorder.

As to the three men who did effect a passage, their horses were so scared and burnt as to be quite unmanageable, and the poor fellows were speedily dismounted and disarmed. Some dozen others, also, who

tried to pass through Fleet Ditch, stuck fast in the mud, and were severely handled by the mob before they could be extricated.

Meantime, loud shouts of triumph were raised by the rioters, and Purchase called upon them to heap more fuel on the fire, which was done by throwing more benches and broken pews upon it. Six stout fellows then approached, bearing a pulpit on their shoulders, which, by their combined efforts, was cast into the very midst of the fire, where it remained erect.

At this spectacle a roar of laughter burst from the rabble, in which some of the guard, in spite of their anger at their discomfiture, joined. Encouraged by this, Purchase shouted out to them, "Don't fight against us, brothers. We are for the queen and the church."

Ordering some of his men to ride round

by Holborn Bridge, and attack the rioters in the rear, Captain Horsey caused a discharge of carbines to be made over the heads of those on the bridge, hoping to intimidate them. This was done, but produced no other result than derisive laughter, and a fresh shower of stones, one of which hit the captain himself on the face.

While the soldiers were loading their carbines, a tall man, in a serjeant's uniform, accompanied by a stout coachman, in the royal livery, forced their way up to Horsey.

"Beg pardon, captain," said the serjeant, "but your object is to capture those ringleaders, not to kill 'em, aint it?"

"Certainly, Serjeant Scales, certainly," replied Horsey.

"Then, with your permission, I'll undertake the job," returned Scales. "Come along, Proddy."

And drawing his sword, he plunged into the flames, and was followed by his companion.

Horsey looked on in curiosity to see what would be the result of this daring act, and was surprised to see both men get through the fire without material injury, though the coachman paused to pluck off his wig, which was considerably singed.

"Ha! you are the scoundrel who thrust me from the Duchess of Marlborough's carriage this morning," cried Purchase, glancing menacingly at Scales. "I am glad we meet again."

"We meet not to part till I have secured you, villain," replied the serjeant. "Yield!"

"Not without a blow or two," rejoined Purchase, with a roar of derision.

"He must take me as well as you,

Geordie," cried Dammaree, brandishing his sword in the serjeant's face.

"Such is my intention," replied Scales.

And seizing one by the back of the neck, and the other by the collar, by a tremendous effort of strength, he dragged them both through the fire, and delivered them, very much scorched and half suffocated, to the guard.

Meantime, Proddy having contrived to clamber up the balustrade of the bridge, attacked Frank Willis, and tried to force the ensign from his grasp. On the onset of the struggle, the attention of the rabble had been chiefly occupied by Scales, but several persons now rushed to the assistance of the standard-bearer.

Unable to make a stand against so many, Proddy gave way, and dropped into the

ditch, but never having quitted his antagonist, he dragged him along with him.

The height from which the coachman fell was not more than twelve or fourteen feet, and the ooze he sunk into was as soft as a feather-bed, so that he ran much greater risk of being suffocated, than of breaking a limb. In fact, he was just disappearing, when a bargeman contrived to pull him out with a boat-hook, and his prisoner, to whom he still clung with desperate tenacity, was consigned to the guard.

On seeing the fate of their leaders, the rioters began to exhibit symptoms of wavering, and shortly afterwards, the detachment of guards sent round by Holborn Bridge coming up, and attacking them with the flat of their swords, the whole rout was dispersed without further resistance.

Almost at the same time, the fire was cleared away with forks and the blazing fragments cast into the ditch, so as to allow a clear passage for the rest of the troop.

This accomplished, Captain Horsey inquired for the serjeant, and, complimenting him on his bravery, thanked him for the service he had rendered the queen. He would also have made similar acknowledgments to Proddy, but the coachman had retired to a neighbouring tavern, to free himself from his muddy habiliments, and prevent any injurious consequences from the immersion by a glass of brandy. Scales, however, undertook to report to his friend the commendation bestowed upon him.

The prisoners were then conveyed to Newgate, as a place of the greatest security; after which Captain Horsey and his troop returned to Whitehall.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE SENTENCE PASSED ON DR. SACHEVERELL; AND WHAT FOLLOWED IT.

NEXT day the guards at St. James's and Whitehall were doubled; the train-bands of Westminster were ordered to remain under arms; regular troops were posted in different quarters; and an address having been presented to the queen by the commons, praying that effectual means might be taken to suppress the tumults, and prevent their recurrence, a proclamation was

immediately made to that effect, and a reward offered for the discovery of the authors and abettors of the late disturbances.

In consequence of these vigorous measures, Sacheverell was obliged to abandon his triumphal chariot, and content himself with a chair, in which he was carried daily to Westminster Hall, very much shorn of his attendants.

The trial having continued upwards of a week, and the counsel for the defence having replied to the different articles of impeachment, Sacheverell pronounced the address prepared for him by Atterbury, Smallridge, and Friend, and revised by Harcourt and Phipps. Delivered with the utmost fervour, and with an air of entire conviction, this masterly and eloquent speech produced a strong impression on most of its hearers.

Among them was the queen herself, who

appeared much moved by it. It mattered not that it was directly opposed on certain points to the doctrines laid down in the discourse on which the prosecution was grounded; it mattered not that its asseverations were audacious, and its appeals startling; that it was, in short, little better than an artful recantation of the speaker's former opinions; it answered the purpose admirably, and was decisive of the issue of the trial. The research and learning displayed in it astonished the most critical, while its extraordinary power and pathos electrified and enchained the inattentive. The sterner portion of the assemblage yielded it the tribute of their applauses, the gentler that of their tears.

By the publication of this speech, which was almost simultaneous with its delivery, the doctor's popularity reached its

apogee, and the most confident anticipations of his honourable acquittal, or of a sentence so lenient as to amount to acquittal, began to be entertained. In any event, the high-church party conceived they had triumphed, and their exultation knew no bounds. Dinners were given at the principal taverns and coffee-houses frequented by the Tories, and the guests sat long, and drank deeply, shouting over the anticipated downfal of the Whigs, and congratulating each other in enthusiastic terms on the brilliant figure cut by their apostle. Not a few disturbances occurred that night in the streets; but the peace-breakers expressing their contrition, when sober, were very lightly dealt with by the authorities. Crowds, too, began to reassemble about the precincts of the Temple and Westminster Hall, but as great decorum was observed,

they were allowed to disperse of their own accord.

Throughout this celebrated process, a singular unanimity of opinion prevailed among the lower orders of the people. To a man, they espoused the cause of Sacheverell; stigmatized the prosecution as unjust and inimical to the church; and denounced its authors in unmeasured terms.

As the trial drew to a close, and the managers replied to the doctor's defence, assailing him with virulent abuse, the indignation of the populace was roused to such a degree, that nothing but the precautions taken prevented new riots, worse thaa those which had previously occurred.

But not only were the people deeply interested in the controversy; it engrossed, from first to last, the attention of the upper classes of society, to the exclusion of every

other topic of conversation; and the most feverish anxiety reigned throughout the capital and the larger provincial towns. Public business was altogether suspended, and the close of the trial was ardently desired, as the sole means of allaying the general ferment of the nation.

This did not occur till the 20th of March, when both houses of parliament having taken their seats, the question was put to the vote among the lords, and Sacheverell found guilty by a majority of seventeen. A plea in arrest of judgment was made, but this was overruled, and on the following day sentence was pronounced.

It was to the effect that Sacheverell should be suspended from preaching for the term of three years, and that his sermon should be burned before the Royal Exchange, by the common hangman, in the

presence of the lord mayor and the sheriffs.

Affording indubitable evidence of the weakness of the ministers, this mild sentence was received with every demonstration of satisfaction by their opponents, as well as by the populace generally. The greatest rejoicings were made. Liquor was freely distributed to the mob at certain taverns; and bands of high-churchmen, with oak-leaves in their hats, paraded the streets, chanting songs of thanksgiving for the liberation of their champion.

Bonfires were lighted at the corners of the streets, round which crowds assembled to drink the doctor's health and happy deliverance, from great barrels of ale given them by certain generous Tories. All who passed by were compelled to pledge them.

At night, most of the houses were illu-

minated, and those who declined to follow the general example had their windows broken by the drunken and uproarious mob. Attempts were made in some quarters to disperse the crowds, and put out the fires; but whether the train-bands were intimidated, or little desirous of putting their orders into execution, certain it is, that the licence of the populace remained unchecked, and numbers continued to occupy the streets to a late hour. Some few stragglers, too much intoxicated to offer resistance, were seized, and conveyed to the roundhouses, but they were discharged next morning with gentle reprimands for their inebriety.

In Pall Mall, nearly opposite Marlborough House, a large bonfire was lighted, and around it some hundreds of persons were collected. Plenty of liquor had been

supplied them, and after shouting for some time for Sacheverell and the Tories, they began to yell against the ministers, and prompted by some of Harley's myrmidons, who had mixed with them, gave three groans for the Duke of Marlborough, and one for the duchess.

At this juncture, and as if prepared for the event, two men suddenly appeared carrying a sedan-chair. Their object being explained, a passage was made for them by the crowd, and they moved on till they reached the edge of the fire. The chair was then opened, and one of the men, who had the air of a valet, dressed in his master's clothes, took forth a figure tricked out in an old black horsehair perriwig, a tattered scarlet robe, and a hideous mask. A paper collar was placed round its neck, and a white staff in its hand.

"Here's de lor-treasurer of England, de Earl of Gotolphin!" shouted the man, in a strong French accent, which was supposed to be assumed.

Much laughter followed, and several voices cried, "Into the fire with him! Into the fire with him!"

"He sall go presently," replied the fellow; "but vait till you see his companion."

"Look at dis!" cried the other man at the sedan-chair—a tall, scraggy personage, wrapped in a loose regimental great coat, and having a nose and chin like a pair of nutcrackers—"Look at him!" he repeated, holding up another figure, wearing an absurdly-ferocious mask, a soiled military coat, a laced hat, and a pair of huge jack boots.

"Dis is de commander-in-sheaf—de great

Marlbrook!" continued the scraggy man, with the hooked nose, shewing the effigy to the spectators, who replied by shouts of laughter, mingled with some expressions of disapprobation. "Dese are de itentical boots he wear at——"

Further speech was cut short by a great stir amid the crowd, and a loud voice exclaimed, "It's a lie!—an infernal lie! Those are not the boots."

The next moment, Scales, followed by Proddy, rushed forward. Having seen what was going forward from the steps of Marlborough House, they had determined, in spite of every risk, to stop the disgraceful proceedings.

As soon as the serjeant got up to the chair, he snatched the figure from the grasp of the man who held it, and trampled it beneath his feet.

"Shame on you!" he cried, looking round at the mob. "Is it thus you treat the defender of your country, and the conqueror of its enemies? Is it thus you show honour to the victor of Blenheim and Ramilies?"

"Who are you that talk thus to us?" demanded a by-stander.

"Who am I?" rejoined the serjeant. "One who has a right to speak, because he has followed the duke in all his campaigns. One who has bled *with* him, and would willingly bleed *for* him. One who would rather have left his corpse on the field of Malplaquet than live to see his commander thus grossly insulted by those who are bound to honour and respect him."

"If that don't touch your hearts they must be harder than mill-stones," cried Proddy, passing his hand before his eyes.

"Are you Englishmen, that you allow a couple of beggarly mounseers to insult your great commander in this way — to say nothin' of his friend the lord-treasurer? If you don't blush for yourselves, I blush for you."

"Mounseers!" exclaimed a by-stander. "Vy, you don't mean to say as how these two ill-looking rascals is mounseers?"

"Yes, but I do," replied Proddy. "They're as surely mounseers as I'm her majesty's coachman!"

"It's Mr. Proddy himself!" cried several voices. "We know him very well."

"I wish you knew him better, and copied his manners," replied the coachman, "for then you'd never act in this way. Look at these two tremblin' cowards! Are they men to be allowed to offer an insult to the Duke of Marlborough?"

"No—no," cried a hundred voices. "We didn't know they were mounseers. We ask your pardon, Mr. Proddy. We were wrong—quite wrong."

"Don't ask my pardon," rejoined Proddy. "Ask the duke's. Shew your sorrow by better conduct in future."

"We will, we will," replied those nearest him. "What shall we do to satisfy you?"

"Give three cheers for the duke, and then read these rascals a lesson," replied Proddy.

Three lusty cheers followed the coachman's speech, during which the two Frenchmen, almost frightened out of their senses at the change wrought in the temper of the mob, endeavoured to escape.

"Stop 'em!" roared the serjeant—"stop 'em!"

"Ay, ay!—here they are, safe enough,"

cried several of the by-standers, arresting them.

Bimbelot and Sauvageon besought their captors to let them go, but ineffectually.

"Epargnez moi, de grace," roared Bimbelot, piteously; "I adore de great Marlbrook."

"Listen to his lingo," cried a waterman. "We must be precious flats not to have found him out sooner."

"I am entirely of your opinion, friend," replied Proddy.

"What shall we do with 'em?" cried a small-coal-man. "Throw 'em into the fire?"

"Or cut 'em into mince-meat?" cried a butcher.

"Or grind 'em to death?" cried a baker.

"No, let's be merciful, and hang 'em!" yelled a tailor's apprentice.

"Pitié! pour l'amour de Dieu! pitié!" cried Sauvageon.

"Oh, mon cher sergent! — mon cher Monsieur Proddy! do say a word for me," implored Bimbelot.

But the coachman turned away in disgust.

"I'll tell you what we'll do with 'em," said Scales to the by-standers. "The valet shall put on his tatterdemalion attire," pointing to the duke's effigy, "and the corporal shall put on t'other."

The proposal was received with universal acclamations, and instant preparations were made to carry it into effect. The straw bolsters were stripped of their covering, and the two Frenchmen, whose clothes were torn from their backs, were compelled to put on the wretched habiliments of their dummies. The masks were then clapped

on their faces, and they looked more complete scare-crows than the effigies themselves.

Bimbelot's appearance occasioned roars of laughter. The old jack-boots in which his little legs were plunged ascended to his hips; the coat covered him like a sack; and the hat thrust over his brows well nigh extinguished him. Sauvageon looked scarcely less ridiculous.

In this guise, they were hoisted upon the top of the sedan-chair, and exposed to the jeers and hootings of the rabble, who, after pelting them with various missiles, threatened to throw them into the fire; and would have executed the menace, no doubt, but for the interference of the serjeant and Proddy. In the end, crackers were tied to their tails, and fired, after which they were allowed to run for their lives, and,

amidst a shower of squibs and blazing embers, which were hurled at them, managed to escape.

Thus ended the trial of Doctor Sacheverell, which paved the way, as had been foreseen by its projectors, for the dissolution of the ministry. The Whigs never recovered the blow so successfully aimed at their popularity; and though they struggled on for some time, from this point their decline may be dated.

Six weeks after the termination of this trial, Doctor Sacheverell commenced a progress through the country, and was everywhere received with extraordinary rejoicing. At Oxford, he was magnificently entertained by the heads of the colleges, and after remaining there during a fortnight, proceeded to Bunbury and Warwick, where he was equally well received. But the greatest

honour shewn him was at Bridgenorth. As he approached this town, he was met by Mr. Creswell, a wealthy gentleman of the neighbourhood, attached to the Jacobite cause, at the head of an immense cavalcade of horse and foot, amounting to many thousands, most of whom wore white breast-knots edged with gold, and gilt laurel leaves in their hats. The roads were lined with people, and, to add to the effect of the procession, the hedges were dressed with flowers to the distance of two miles. The steeples were adorned with flags and colours, and the bells rang out merrily.

This was the last scene of the doctor's triumph.

CHAPTER IX.

SHEWING HOW THE WHIG MINISTRY WAS DISSOLVED.

THE cabals of Harley, to effect the dissolution of the Whig ministry, were at length crowned with success. Consternation was carried into the cabinet by the sudden and unlooked-for appointment of the Duke of Somerset to the place of lord-chamberlain, in the room of the Earl of Kent, who was induced to retire by the offer of a dukedom; as well as by the removal of Sunderland,

notwithstanding the efforts of his colleagues and the Duchess of Marlborough to keep him in his post; but the final blow was given by the disgrace of Godolphin, who, having parted with the queen over-night, on apparently amicable terms, was confounded, the next morning, by receiving a letter from her, intimating that he was dismissed from her service, and requiring him to break his staff, in place of delivering it up in person. A retiring pension of four thousand a-year was promised him at the same time, but it was never paid; nor was it ever demanded by the high-minded treasurer, though he stood greatly in need of it.

The treasury was instantly put into commission, and Lord Poulet placed at its head, while Harley was invested with the real powers of government. Proposals of a coalition were then made to such Whig

ministers as still remained in office, but they were indignantly rejected, it being supposed that the Tories could not carry on the adminstration, inasmuch as they had not the confidence of the country. No alternative, therefore, was left the queen, but to dismiss the Whigs altogether, which was done, and parliament dissolved.

The result of this latter step proved the correctness of Harley's calculations. Hitherto, the junta had possessed entire control over the House of Commons, and they relied upon its support, to embarrass the measures of the new ministers, and ultimately regain their lost power. But the returns of the new parliament undeceived them, manifesting a vast preponderance in favour of the Tories.

Mortification and defeat had been everywhere experienced by the Whigs. The

recent impeachment was constantly thrown in their teeth: those who had voted for it were insulted and threatened by the rabble; while the name of Sacheverell served as the rallying word of their adversaries. The new parliament therefore placed a Tory ministry out of the reach of immediate danger.

Prior to the elections, the ministerial appointments were completed. Saint-John was made secretary of state; the Duke of Ormond, lord-lieutenant of Ireland; the Earl of Rochester, president of the council; the Duke of Buckingham, lord-steward of the household; and other promotions occurred, not necessary to be particularized.

So constructed, the new cabinet commenced its work; and, supported as it was by the queen, seemed to hold out a reasonable prospect of stability. Energy and

unanimity at first marked its progress, and the fierce and unscrupulous opposition it encountered only added to its strength.

Disunions and jealousies, however, began ere long to arise, inspiring the displaced party with a hope that the combination which had proved fatal to them would be speedily disorganized.

Harley had not yet attained the goal of his ambition; and now, at the moment when he was about to put forth his hand to grasp the reward of his toils—the treasurer's staff—two rivals stepped forward, threatening to snatch it from him. These were, the Earl of Rochester and Saint-John. Between Harley and Rochester an old enmity had subsisted, which, though patched up for a time, had latterly been revived in all its original bitterness. Conceiving himself entitled, from his long experience, his tried

attachment to the church, and his relationship to the queen (he was her maternal uncle), to the chief office of the government, Rochester put in his claim for it, and Anne was too timid and indecisive to give him a positive refusal. Saint-John, on the other hand, conscious of his superior abilities, disdaining to be ruled, and master of the Jacobite and movement sections of the Tory party, was determined no longer to hold a subordinate place in the cabinet, and signified as much to Mrs. Masham, to whom he paid secret and assiduous court. Thus opposed, Harley seemed in danger of losing the prize for which he had laboured so hard, when an occurrence took place, which though at first apparently fraught with imminent peril, proved in the end the means of accomplishing his desires. To explain this, it will be necessary to go back for a short space.

One night, about six months after Sacheverell's trial, a man suddenly darted out of Little Man's coffee-house—a notorious haunt of sharpers—with a drawn sword in his hand, and made off at a furious pace towards Pall Mall. He was pursued by half-a-dozen persons, armed like himself, who chased him as far as the Haymarket, but losing sight of him there, they waited a few moments, and then turned back.

"Well, let him go," said one of them; "we know where to find him, if the major's wounds should prove mortal."

"The major has won above five hundred pounds from him," observed another; "so if he has got hurt, he can afford to buy plasters for his wounds."

"It has been diamond cut diamond throughout, but the major has proved the sharper in more senses than one," observed

a third, with a laugh; "but as the marquis has palmed, topped, knapped, and slurred the dice himself, he could not, in reason, blame the major for using fulhams."

"I shouldn't care if the marquis could keep his temper," said a fourth; "but his sword is out whenever he loses, and the major is not the first, by some score, that he has pinked."

"Defend me from the marquis!" said the first. "I suppose we have done with him now. He's regularly cleaned out."

"Yet he's so clever a fellow, that it wouldn't surprise me if he were to find out a way to retrieve his fortunes," said the third.

"He'd sell himself to the devil to do so, I don't doubt," remarked the first; "but, come! let's go back to the major. We must procure him some assistance."

Finding his pursuers gone, the Marquis de Guiscard, who had retreated into a small street near the Haymarket, issued from his place of concealment, and proceeded slowly homewards. His gait was unsteady, as if from intoxication; and he uttered ever and anon a deep oath, smiting his forehead with his clenched hand.

On reaching his residence, the door was opened by Bimbelot, who started on beholding his wild and haggard looks. Snatching a light from the terrified valet, Guiscard rushed up stairs and entered a room, but presently returned to the landing, and called to Bimbelot, in a loud, angry voice—

"Where's your mistress, rascal? Is she not come home?"

"No, monseigneur," replied the valet. "Madame is gone to the masquerade, and you are aware it is seldom over before four or five o'clock in the morning."

Uttering an angry ejaculation, the marquis returned to the room, and flinging himself into a chair, buried his face in his hands, and was for some time lost in the bitterest and most painful reflection.

He then arose, and pacing to and fro, exclaimed—"Disgrace and ruin stare me in the face! What shall I do?—how retrieve myself? Fool! madman that I was, to risk all I had against the foul play of those sharpers. They have fleeced me of everything; and to-morrow, my house, and all within it, will be seized by the merciless Jew, Solomons, who has hunted me down like a beast of prey. The discontinuance of my pension of a hundred ducatoons a month from the States-General of Holland —the disbanding of my regiment, and the consequent loss of my pay—the extrava gances of the woman I was fool enough to

marry for the bribe of a thousand pounds from Harley, thrice which amount she has since spent—the failure of my schemes—the death of my stanch friend the Comte de Briançon—all these calamities have reduced me to such a strait, that I was weak enough—mad enough—to place my whole fortune on one last stake. And now I have lost it!—lost it to a sharper! But if he has robbed me, he will scarce live to enjoy the spoil."

And with a savage laugh he sat down, and relapsed into silence. His thoughts, however, were too maddening to let him remain long tranquil.

"Something must be done!" he cried, getting up, distractedly; "but what—what? To-morrow, the wreck of my property will be seized, and I shall be thrown into prison by Solomons. But I can fly—

the night is before me. To fly, I must have the means of flight—and how procure them? Is there nothing here I can carry off—my pictures are gone—my plate—all my valuables — except — ha! the jewels Angelica brought from Saint-John!—They are left—they will save me. The necklace alone cost three hundred pounds. Suppose, however, it fetches a third of the sum, I can contrive to exist upon that till something turns up. Money is to be had from France. Ha! ha! I am not utterly lost. I shall retire for a time, only to appear again with new splendour."

Full of these thoughts he proceeded to a small cabinet standing near the bed, and opening it, took out a case, which he unfastened.

It was empty.

"The jewels are gone!—she has robbed

me!" he exclaimed. "Perdition seize her! My last hope is annihilated!"

Transported with rage and despair, he lost all command of himself, and taking down a pistol, which hung near the bed, he held it to his temples, and was about to pull the trigger, when Bimbelot, who had been on the watch for some minutes, rushed forward, and implored him to stay his hand.

"I know you are ruined, monseigneur," cried the valet; "but it will not mend the matter to kill yourself."

"Fool!" exclaimed the marquis, furiously —"but for your stupid interference all my troubles would have been over by this time. Why should I live?"

"In the hope of better days," returned Bimbelot. "Fortune may smile upon you as heretofore."

"No—no, the jade has deserted me for ever!" cried the marquis. "I shall not struggle longer. Leave me!"

"Only postpone your resolution till to-morrow, monseigneur, and I'm persuaded you will think better of it," urged Bimbelot; "if not, the same remedy is at hand."

"Well," replied Guiscard, putting down the pistol, "I *will* wait till to-morrow, if only to settle accounts with my faithless wife."

"Better let her settle them herself," replied Bimbelot. "If monseigneur would be advised by me, he would quit this house for a short time, and live in retirement, till means can be devised of pacifying his creditors."

"You awaken new hope within my breast, my faithful fellow," replied Guis-

card; "I will leave to-morrow morning before any one is astir, and you shall accompany me."

"I wont desert you, monseigneur," replied Bimbelot; "but there's no fear of disturbing the household, for all the servants are gone."

"Gone!" exclaimed Guiscard.

"Yes, monseigneur," replied Bimbelot; "like rats, I suppose, they smelt a falling house. They all quitted this evening, and I fancy, not empty-handed. Mrs. Charlotte, after attiring her lady for the masquerade, dressed herself, packed up her things, and drove off with them in a coach."

"A curse go with her!" cried the marquis.

"I alone have remained behind, because," whimpered the hypocritical valet — "be-

cause, my dear and noble master, I would not desert you in your extremity."

"You shall not regret your fidelity, if brighter days shine upon me, Bimbelot," replied Guiscard, touched by his devotion.

"There is one way in which you can readily repair your fortune, monseigneur," replied Bimbelot. "Being on the spot, you can exercise a vigilant espionage over the English court. Our monarch, the great Louis, will pay well for any secrets of importance."

"The secrets may be obtained," replied Guiscard, "but it is difficult to convey them. Everything is easy with money at command, but without it——"

"Monseigneur was not wont to shrink before difficulties," said Bimbelot.

"Nor do I shrink now," replied the mar-

quis. "I will take any means, however desperate, to repair my fortunes. To-morrow, I will make an appeal to Harley and Saint-John to assist me in my emergency, and if they refuse me, I will frighten them into compliance."

"Spoken like yourself, monseigneur," replied the valet.

"I shall try to get a few hours' repose," replied the marquis, throwing himself upon the bed; "and I will then seek a hiding-place with you. Call me an hour before daybreak."

"Without fail, monseigneur," replied the valet. "If Madame la Maréchale should chance to return, what is to be done with her?"

"It will be time enough to think of her when she arrives," rejoined Guiscard, drowsily. "Shew her to her room."

"Monseigneur will use no violence?" supplicated the valet.

"Fear nothing," replied Guiscard; "and now leave me. I shall be calmer when I have had a little sleep."

On going down stairs, Bimbelot repaired to a back room, where Sauvageon was comfortably seated, with a bottle of claret before him.

"I was just in time," observed the valet; "he was going out of the world in a desperate hurry, and that wouldn't suit our purpose."

"Not in the least," replied Sauvageon, emptying his glass. "What's he about now?"

"Taking a little repose," returned Bimbelot, "prior to quitting the house. I threw out a hint about renewing his correspondence with the French court, and he snapped greedily at the bait."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Sauvageon. "We shall have him, then."

"Safe enough," replied Bimbelot. "The reward promised us by Mr. Harley for the discovery of his secret practices, will not be lost. We shall be able to bring them home to him ere long."

As the words were uttered, a loud knocking was heard at the outer door.

"Sarpedieu!" exclaimed Bimbelot, "Madame la Maréchale has returned before her time. This is unlucky."

So saying, he hurried to the door, and finding it was the marchioness, ushered her in with as much respect as if nothing had happened, and lighted her up stairs, taking the precaution, however, to desire the chairmen to wait.

Entering a chamber at the head of the stairs, Angelica threw down her mask, and

divesting herself of a pink silk domino, disclosed a magnificent dress of white brocade. Her head was covered with a fancy Spanish hat, looped with diamonds, and adorned with ostrich feathers. She was considerably fatter than before, and her features were coarser, but she still looked excessively handsome.

"Send Charlotte to me," she cried, sinking in a chair.

"Mrs. Charlotte is not returned, madame," replied Bimbelot.

"Not returned!" exclaimed Angelica. "How dared she go out without leave! I shall discharge her in the morning. Send Dawson, then."

"Mrs. Dawson is gone out, too," replied Bimbelot. "In fact, all the women have gone out; but I shall be very happy to assist madame, if I can be of any service."

"Assist me!" cried Angelica, starting up. "Marry, come up! here's assurance with a vengeance! A valet offer to be a lady's maid! Leave the room instantly, fellow. I shall acquaint the marquis with your presumption."

"Le voici, madame," replied Bimbelot, grinning malignantly. And he retired, to make way for Guiscard, who entered the room at the moment.

"What is the meaning of this, marquis?" cried Angelica. "Have you discharged the servants?"

"They have discharged themselves," replied Guiscard, coldly. "Having discovered that I am a ruined man, they have taken themselves off."

"Ruined! oh, gracious!" cried Angelica. "Give me the salts, or I shall faint."

"No you wont," he replied, drily.

"Now listen to me. Our ruin may be averted for a time, perhaps altogether, by the sale of the jewels you brought with you when I took you from Saint-John. Let me have them—quick!"

"I can't give them to you," sobbed Angelica.

"Why not?" demanded Guiscard, fiercely.

"Because—because I've pledged them to Mr. Solomons, the Jew, for a hundred pounds," she answered.

"He gave you not the tithe of what they're worth," cried Guiscard, gnashing his teeth. "But it matters not, since they're gone. Have you any other trinkets left?"

"Nothing but this diamond buckle, and I shan't part with it," replied Angelica.

"You wont?" cried the marquis.

"I wont," she answered, firmly.

"We'll see that," he replied, snatching the hat from her, and tearing out the buckle.

"I am glad you've done it, marquis," said Angelica. "Your brutality justifies me in leaving you."

"Don't trouble yourself to find an excuse for going, I pray, madam," said the marquis, bitterly. "It is sufficient that I am ruined. I neither expected you to remain with me, nor desired it. I have no doubt you will find some one ready to receive you."

"That's my concern, marquis," she rejoined. "Provided I don't trouble you, you need not inquire where I go."

"Undoubtedly not," said Guiscard, bowing. "We part, then, for ever. And remember, in case you should feel inclined

for another union, that a Fleet marriage is as easily dissolved as contracted."

"I shan't forget it," she replied; "but I've had enough of marriage for the present. And now, good night, marquis. I shall be gone before you are up to-morrow morning. I would go now, but——"

"Madame la Maréchale's chair still waits," said Bimbelot, entering the room.

"How purely fortunate!" exclaimed Angelica. "In that case I shall go at once. Tell the men to take me to Mr. Solomons's, in Threadneedle-street. It's a long distance, but they will be well paid."

"Make my compliments to Mr. Solomons, madam," said the marquis, with a sneer; "and tell him that as he has become possessed of all my valuables—yourself the chief of them—I hope he will shew me

more consideration than he has hitherto done."

"I shall not fail to deliver the message," replied Angelica. "Adieu, marquis!" And she tripped down stairs, followed by Bimbelot.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE MARQUIS DE GUISCARD'S ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE HARLEY.

An hour before daybreak, a coach was brought by Bimbelot, into which such things were put as the marquis thought fit to remove. He then drove to the Red Lion, in Wardour-street, a small tavern, where he hoped to remain unmolested. On the same day, at the hazard of arrest, he attended Harley's levée, but was refused

admittance, and, exasperated at the affront, he returned to the inn, and wrote a long letter to the minister, threatening, if assistance were not given him, to reveal all that had passed between them to the Duchess of Marlborough.

On the following morning, he waited upon Saint-John, with whom he had better success. The secretary received him kindly, and, apparently much touched by the account he gave of his circumstances, blamed Harley for his indifference, and promised to represent Guiscard's condition to the queen. And he was as good as his word, for he spoke so warmly to Anne, that she graciously ordered a pension of five hundred a-year to be granted to the marquis.

The order being notified to the commissioners of the treasury, Harley struck off a hundred a-year from the grant, alleging, in

excuse, that the funds of the exchequer were exhausted. For this ill turn, as he conceived it, Guiscard vowed revenge, and sought to obtain an audience of the queen, for the purpose of making disclosures to her, but was unable to effect his object.

Some degree of credit being restored to him, the marquis again ventured forth publicly; took lodgings in Rider-street, and began to frequent the coffee-houses as before. He still played, but with greater caution, and often came off a winner of small sums. Thus encouraged, he proceeded to greater lengths, and in one night was once more beggared by a run of ill luck.

In this desperate extremity, he had recourse to Saint-John, who, moved to compassion by his tale, and having, moreover, a liking for loose characters, gave him out of his own purse a sum sufficient for his

immediate necessities, recommending him caution in the use of it; but so far from acting up to the advice, the marquis on that very day, as if drawn irresistibly to destruction, lost it all to the faro table.

Shame having by this time utterly forsaken him, he once more applied to Saint-John, but met with a peremptory refusal, and ever after this the secretary was denied to him.

Driven to the most desperate straits, he now subsisted on such small sums as he could borrow—for he had anticipated the first instalment of his pension, and was frequently reduced to positive want. He lodged in Maggot's-court, an obscure passage leading out of Little Swallow-street, where he occupied a single room, miserably furnished. He still continued, however, to keep up a decent exterior, and daily

haunted the purlieus of the palace, in the hope of picking up information.

Bimbelot had long since quitted his service, but frequently visited him, under the plea of offering him assistance, though in reality to ascertain whether he was carrying on a correspondence with France. While freely confessing that he was so engaged, the marquis was too cautious to admit his former valet into his plans, until, one day, the latter found him in the act of sealing a packet, when, as if unable to constrain himself, he broke forth thus—

"Ere many days, Bimbelot, you will see the whole of this capital—nay, the whole of this country, convulsed. A great blow will be struck, and mine will be the hand to strike it!"

"What mean you, monseigneur?" said the valet, trembling with eager curiosity.

"I have just written to the court of France," pursued Guiscard, with increasing excitement, "that a *coup-d'etat* may be expected, which will cause a wonderful alteration in the affairs of this country; and I have added that this is the most favourable conjuncture for the prince, whom they here wrongfully style the Pretender, to make a descent upon England, where he will find great numbers disposed to join him, and amongst the rest, three parts of the clergy."

"But the blow you mean to strike—the blow, monseigneur?" demanded the valet.

"Will be aimed at the highest person in the realm," replied Guiscard, smiling savagely. "The prince will find the throne vacant!"

"Ha!—indeed!" ejaculated Bimbelot, unable to repress his surprise and horror.

"Villain!" cried Guiscard, seizing him by the throat. "I have trusted you too far. Swear never to repeat a word I have uttered, or you are a dead man!"

"I swear it," replied Bimbelot. "I have no intention of betraying you, monseigneur."

Reassured by the valet's protestations, Guiscard released him, and as soon as he could venture to do so with safety, Bimbelot quitted the house. He did not, however, go far, but entered an adjoining tavern, whence he could play the spy on the marquis's movements.

Shortly afterwards, Guiscard came forth, when Bimbelot followed him, but at such a distance as not to attract his notice.

Shaping his course to Golden-square, the marquis stopped at the Earl of Portmore's residence, and delivered a packet to one of

the servants. As soon as the coast was clear, Bimbelot came up, and learnt that the packet was addressed to the Earl of Portmore, (then commander-in-chief in Portugal,) and was to be forwarded to his lordship, with his other letters, by his wife, the Countess of Dorchester.

Somewhat puzzled by the information, Bimbelot resolved to lay it before Harley, and he accordingly proceeded to Saint James's-square for that purpose. He was quickly admitted to an audience with the minister, and the intelligence appeared so important to the latter, that a queen's messenger was instantly despatched for the packet, and in a short time returned with it.

On breaking the cover, its contents proved to be a letter addressed to a merchant at Lisbon, and within that was an-

other cover, directed to M. Moreau, a banker in Paris, which being unsealed, the whole of the marquis's atrocious projects were disclosed.

After perusing these documents, Harley ordered Bimbelot to be detained, and repaired to Mr. Saint-John, by whom a warrant was issued for the marquis's arrest.

Three queen's messengers were then sent in search of the offender. By good fortune they found him in Saint James's Park, and before he could offer any resistance, secured and disarmed him. The marquis besought them to kill him on the spot, but, turning a deaf ear to his entreaties, they conveyed him to the Cock Pit, where he was placed in a room adjoining the secretary of state's office. His clothes were then carefully searched, and everything taken from him; but the scrutiny was scarcely concluded,

when he contrived, unperceived, to possess himself of a penknife which chanced to be lying on a desk near him, and to slip it into his sleeve. Possessed of this weapon, all his audacity and confidence returned, and he awaited his approaching examination with apparent unconcern.

Meanwhile, the news of Guiscard's capture was conveyed to Harley, and shortly afterwards, a privy council, consisting of himself, Saint-John, Sir Simon Harcourt, the Earl of Rochester, the Dukes of Newcastle, Ormond, and Queensbury, together with Lords Dartmouth and Poulet, assembled in the secretary's room,—a plainly furnished chamber, containing merely a large table covered with green cloth, round which a number of chairs were set, a small side-table for the under-secretaries, and a full-length portrait of the queen by Kneller.

Saint-John officiated as chairman. After a brief conference among the council, the prisoner was introduced. He looked pale as death, but maintained a stern and composed demeanour, and glanced haughtily and menacingly at Saint-John and Harley.

"I am surprised and sorry to see you in this position, marquis," observed the latter.

"You may be sorry, but can scarcely be surprised, sir," rejoined Guiscard.

"How so?" demanded the other, sharply. "Do you mean to infer——"

"I infer nothing," interrupted Guiscard; "let the examination proceed."

"You are brought here, prisoner, charged with treason and leze majesté of the highest class," commenced Saint-John.

"By whom am I thus charged?" asked Guiscard, impatiently.

"No matter by whom," rejoined the

secretary. "You are accused of holding secret and treasonable correspondence with the court of France. How do you answer?"

"I deny it," replied Guiscard, boldly.

"The next allegation against you, prisoner, is one of the blackest dye," pursued Saint-John: "you are charged with plotting to take the life of our sovereign lady the queen, to whom you, though a foreigner, are bound by the strongest ties of gratitude, for many favours conferred by her majesty upon you."

"Heaven forbid I should be capable of harbouring a thought against the queen!" cried the marquis, fervently. "I should indeed be a monster of ingratitude."

At this asseveration, there was an irrepressible murmur of indignation among the council.

"I know the miscreant who has thus

maligned me," continued Guiscard. "He is a man who served me as valet—a man of infamous and unscrupulous character, who has forged this story to obtain a reward from Mr. Harley."

"I would now ask, prisoner," pursued Saint-John, "if you have any acquaintance with M. Moreau, a banker, at Paris?" and if you have held any communication with him lately?"

At the mention of this name, in spite of himself, Guiscard trembled.

"I used to know such a person," he replied; "but I have had no correspondence with him for many years."

"That is false!" replied Harley, producing the packet. "Here are your letters to him, in which you make the most diabolical proposals to the French government."

At the sight of the packet, a terrible

change came over Guiscard. His limbs shook, and the damps gathered thickly on his brow.

"It is useless to brave it out further, wretched man!" said Harley. "As some slight atonement of your offence, I recommend you to make a full confession."

"I *will* confess, Mr. Harley," replied Guiscard, "and I may say more than you may care to hear. But first, I beg to have a word in private with Mr. Saint-John."

"That is impossible," rejoined the secretary. "You are here before the council as a criminal, and if you have anything to advance, it must be uttered before us all."

"What I have to say is important to the state," urged Guiscard; "but I will not utter it, except to you. You may make what use you please of it afterwards."

"The request is unusual, and cannot be granted," replied Saint-John, coldly.

"You will repent your non-compliance with my wishes, Mr. Saint-John," said Guiscard.

"This pertinacity is intolerable," cried the secretary, rising. "Let the messengers remove the prisoner," he added to one of the under-secretaries.

"A moment—only one moment," said Guiscard, approaching Harley, who had taken the seat just quitted by Saint-John. "You will intercede with her majesty to spare my life, Mr. Harley? You were once my friend."

"I can hold out no hope for you, prisoner," replied Harley, sternly. "The safety of the state requires that crimes of such magnitude as yours should not go unpunished."

"Where are the messengers?" cried Saint-John, impatiently.

"Will you not endeavour to prove my innocence, Mr. Harley?" said Guiscard, drawing close to the minister.

"How can I, with such damning evidences as these before me?" cried Harley, pointing to the letters. "Stand back, sir!"

"Can nothing move you?" repeated Guiscard.

Harley shook his head.

"Then have at thee, thou blacker traitor than myself!" thundered Guiscard.

And plucking the penknife suddenly from his sleeve, he plunged it into Harley's breast. The blade came in contact with the bone, and snapped near the handle, but unconscious of the accident, Guiscard repeated the blow with greater violence than

The Marquis de Guiscard attempting to assassinate Harley

before, exclaiming—"This to thy heart, perfidious villain!"

The suddenness of the assault for a moment paralyzed the spectators. But recovering themselves, they sprang to Harley's assistance. Saint-John was the first to attack the assassin, and passed his sword twice through his body; but though Guiscard received other wounds from the Duke of Newcastle, who, being seated at the lower end of the table, leapt upon it, and thus made his way to the scene of action, as well as from Lord Dartmouth, he did not fall. Some of the council nearest Guiscard were so much alarmed by his infuriated appearance, that, fearing he might turn his rage upon them, they sought to protect themselves with chairs. Others shouted for help, while the Earl of Poulet called loudly to Saint-John and Newcastle not to

kill the assassin, as it was most important to the ends of justice that his life should be preserved.

Amid this confusion the messengers and door-keepers rushed in, and threw themselves upon Guiscard, who, wounded as he was, defended himself with surprising vigour, and some minutes elapsed before he could be overpowered. In the struggle he received many severe bruises, one of which chancing in the back, occasioned his death.

While the messengers were in the act of binding him as he lay upon the ground, he said to the Duke of Ormond, who stood near him, "Is Harley dead? I thought I heard him fall."

"No, villain! he lives to balk your vindictive purpose," replied the duke.

Guiscard gnashed his teeth in impotent rage.

"I pray your grace dispatch me!" he groaned.

"That is the executioner's business, not mine," replied the duke, turning away.

Nothing could exceed the calmness and composure exhibited by Harley on this trying occasion. Uncertain whether he had received a mortal wound, he held a handkerchief to his breast to stanch the blood, patiently awaiting the arrival of a surgeon, and conversing tranquilly with his friends, who crowded round him, expressing the most earnest solicitude for his safety.

And well might he be content, though he knew not then why. That blow made him lord treasurer and earl of Oxford.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEREIN HARLEY ATTAINS THE HIGHEST POINT OF HIS AMBITION; AND THE MARQUIS DE GUISCARD IS DISPOSED OF.

SHORTLY afterwards, Mr. Bussiére, an eminent surgeon, residing near Saint James's Park, arrived, and while examining the extent of injury sustained by the sufferer, the penknife-blade fell from the waistcoat into his hand. Seeing this, Harley took it from him, observing with a smile, that it belonged to him, and requesting that the handle of the knife might be preserved.

He then demanded of the surgeon, whether his hurts were likely to prove mortal? "If you think so," he said, "do not hide your fears from me. I profess no idle disregard of death, but there are some family affairs which it is necessary I should arrange before I am driven to extremity."

"I am not apprehensive of any serious consequences, sir," replied Bussiére; "but as a slight fever will probably ensue, it may be well not to allow anything to disturb your mind. If you have any arrangements, therefore, to make, I would recommend you not to postpone them."

"I understand you, sir," returned Harley; "and will not neglect the caution."

His wounds were then probed and dressed. He bore the operation, which was necessarily painful, with great fortitude, not once uttering a groan, and jestingly re-

marking, as the incision was enlarged, that the surgeon's knife was sharper than Guiscard's. The dressing completed, Bussiére declared that there was not the least danger, and that he would be answerable for his patient's speedy and perfect cure—an announcement which was heard with the liveliest satisfaction by every one present except the assassin, who, as he lay bound in a corner, gave vent to his disappointment in a deep execration. This drew Harley's attention to him, and he begged Bussiére to examine his wounds.

"Better let me die," cried Guiscard; "for if I recover I will make such revelations as shall for ever blast your credit."

"Ungrateful dog!" exclaimed Saint-John; "actuated as you evidently are by vindictive motives, any statement you may make will be disregarded."

"You yourself are equally guilty with

Harley, Saint-John," rejoined Guiscard. "I denounce you both as traitors to your country and your queen, and I desire to have my words written down, that I may subscribe them before I die."

"It is useless," cried the Duke of Ormond. "No one will believe the accusation of an assassin."

"You are all in league together," cried Guiscard. "If you will not listen to me, let a priest be sent for. I will make my confession to him."

"Better let the villain speak," remarked the Earl of Rochester, who, it may be remembered, was Harley's opponent, "or it may be said hereafter that his charges were stifled."

"I perfectly agree with you, my lord," said Harley. "Let one of the secretaries take down his declaration."

"Do not trouble yourself further," in-

terposed Bussiére. "Any excitement will retard your recovery, and may possibly endanger your safety."

"Be advised, Harley," urged Saint-John.

"No," replied the other; "I will stay to hear him. I am well enough now. Say on, prisoner. What have you to allege against me?"

Guiscard made no reply.

"Why do you not speak, villain?" demanded the Earl of Rochester.

"He cannot, my lord," replied Bussiére; "he has fainted. Some time must elapse before he can be brought round, and then I doubt whether he will be able to talk coherently."

"If such is your opinion, sir, it is useless to remain here longer," rejoined Harley. "Saint-John, will you acquaint her ma-

jesty with the attempt made upon my life, and assure her that, so far from repining at the mischance, I rejoice in the opportunity it affords me of testifying my fidelity. Had I not been true to the queen, her enemies would not assail me thus."

"I will faithfully deliver your message," replied Saint-John; "and I am sure the queen will be as sensible of your devotion as we are of your courage."

With this, Harley, assisted by Bussiére and the Duke of Ormond, entered the sedan-chair which had been brought into the room, and was conveyed in it to his own residence.

Bussiére next turned his attention to the prisoner, and after dressing his wounds, which were numerous and severe, a litter was brought, in which he was transported to Newgate, under the care of two messen-

gers, who had orders to watch him narrowly, lest he should attempt his life.

In compliance with Harley's request, Saint-John hastened to the queen to inform her of the disastrous occurrence. She was much shocked by the intelligence, as well as touched by Harley's message, and expressed the most earnest hopes for his recovery, that she might have opportunity of proving her sense of his devotion. Next day, addresses were made by both houses of parliament, expressive of their concern at the "barbarous and villanous attempt" made upon Mr. Harley's person, and beseeching her majesty to give directions for the removal of all papists from the cities of London and Westminster. An act was afterwards passed, making it felony, without benefit of clergy, to attempt the life of a privy-councillor.

For nearly a week Harley continued in a

precarious state, owing to the sloughing of his wound, and more than a month elapsed before his perfect recovery was established. His first step was to wait upon the queen at Saint James's, to offer thanks for her frequent inquiries after him.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Anne, "that the malice of our enemies—for your enemies are mine—has been disappointed. I shall take care to let them see that each demonstration of their hatred only calls forth fresh favours from me."

On Harley's first appearance in the House of Commons, congratulations on his escape were offered him by the speaker, to which Harley replied with much emotion:—"The honour done me by this house so far exceeds my deserts, that all I can do or suffer for the public during the whole course of my life, will still leave me in debt to your good-

ness. Whenever I place my hand upon my breast, it will put me in mind of the thanks due to God; of my duty to the queen; and of the debt of gratitude and service I must always owe to this honourable house."

Harley's return to business was signalized by the introduction of a grand project which he had long entertained for paying off the national debts and deficiencies, by allowing the proprietors of such debts six per cent. interest, and granting them the monopoly of the trade to the South Sea; a scheme which afterwards gave rise to the establishment of the South Sea Company. This scheme, though little better than a bubble, as it eventually proved, was admirably adapted to the speculative spirit of the age, and met with a most enthusiastic reception. The bill was instantly carried, and a new mine of wealth was supposed to be opened.

Most opportunely for Harley, just at this juncture, while his popularity was at its zenith, his rival, the Earl of Rochester, died suddenly; and the queen, having no longer any check upon her impulses, at once yielded to them; and having first created Harley Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, on the anniversary of the restoration of her uncle, Charles the Second, to the kingdom, placed the treasurer's staff in his hands.

Thus Harley's ambitious designs were at length crowned with success.

Brought to Newgate, Guiscard was taken to an underground cell on the Common Side of the gaol, the dismal appearance of which struck him with so much horror, that he implored his attendants to let him have another chamber; and absolutely refused to lie down upon the loathsome bed allotted to him. His condition was supposed to be

so dangerous, that force was not resorted to; and he was allowed to lie on a bench until the following morning, when the surgeon visited him, and found him in so alarming a state, that he instantly caused him to be removed to an airy apartment in the Master's Side. Here his attire was taken off, when another wound was discovered in the back, which, from want of attention, had already assumed a very dangerous appearance. As soon as it was dressed, he was put to bed; but his sufferings were too great to allow him to obtain any repose. About the middle of the day, the door was opened by the turnkey, who informed Guiscard that his wife desired to see him, and the next moment Angelica was ushered in.

"What brings your here, madam?" demanded Guiscard, fiercely.

"I have come to see you—to know whether I can be of use to you—to implore your forgiveness," she replied, in trembling accents.

"Then you have come on an idle errand," he rejoined. "Begone! and take my curse with you."

"Oh! pity me!" she cried, still lingering—"pity, and forgive me!"

"Forgive you!" echoed Guiscard. "But for you, I should not be what I am? —But for you, I should now be the inmate of a magnificent mansion, reposing on a downy couch, full of hope and health, instead of lying here on this wretched bed, and in this narrow chamber—a felon—only to go hence to the gallows! Off with you, accursed woman! your presence stifles me. May your end be like mine—may you die

in an hospital, shunned by all, a leprous, loathsome mass!"

"Horrible!" shrieked Angelica. "Oh! let me out! let me out!"

As the door was opened for her by the turnkey, another person was introduced. It was Bimbelot, who could not repress his curiosity to behold his victim.

"Ah, monseigneur! ah, my dear master! do I behold you in this deplorable condition!" whimpered the hypocritical valet.

"Ha!" exclaimed Guiscard, starting bolt upright in bed, and glaring at the valet with so fierce an expression that the latter retreated towards the door. "Are you come here to deride my misery?"

"On the contrary, monseigneur," replied Bimbelot, trembling. "I am come to offer my services. I deplore your situation, and will do anything in my power to relieve it."

"Get hanged, then, at the same tree as myself," rejoined the marquis, savagely.

"I am sorry I cannot afford you that satisfaction, monseigneur," replied Bimbelot; "but there is no need to talk of hanging at all. I am the bearer of good news to you. Her Majesty offers you a pardon, if you will make a full confession."

"Ah, villain, you are at your damnable practices again!" cried Guiscard. "You think to delude me further. But you are mistaken."

"No, monseigneur, I am your friend," replied the valet.

"Well, I will trust you once more," said Guiscard, changing his tone. "I have something to say to you. Come near, that I may whisper in your ear."

"You may place perfect reliance on me,"

replied Bimbelot, winking at the turnkey as he advanced towards the prisoner.

But as he came within reach, Guiscard caught him by the throat, dragged him upon the bed, and would have strangled him, if the turnkey had not flown to the poor wretch's assistance. As he was dragged out of the cell, more dead than alive, the marquis gave vent to a loud demoniacal laugh.

But the exertion proved fatal to him. Ere long, he became delirious, uttered the most frightful blasphemies and imprecations, and evinced his terror of the ignominious death which he fancied awaited him, by clasping his hands round his throat, as if to protect himself from the hangman. An attempt was made later in the day, when he became calmer, to obtain a confession from him; but he was so oppressed by

an extravasation of blood which filled part of the cavity of the chest, that he was unable to speak, and indeed could scarcely breathe. His wounds had now become excessively painful, and some operations were performed by the surgeons for his relief. In this state of suffering, he lingered on till late in the following night, and then expired.

A shameful indignity was offered to his remains. The surgeons having received instructions to preserve the body, placed it in a large pickling-tub, in which state it was exhibited to a host of lovers of horrible sights by the jailors. The body was afterwards interred, without any ceremony, in the common burying-place of the malefactors dying in Newgate.

Such was the end of the gay and once-admired Marquis de Guiscard! the shame of his race.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTAINING THE FINAL INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE QUEEN AND THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

ALL friendly intercourse between Anne and the Duchess of Marlborough had for some time ceased, and the latter, becoming sensible, at last, of the ascendancy of her rival, Mrs. Masham, and of the utter impossibility of regaining the influence she had lost, wrote to remind the queen of a promise she had extorted from her in a moment of good-nature, to bestow her places upon her

daughters, and entreated permission to retire in their favour.

Anne replied, that she could not think of parting with her for the present; but being again importuned, peremptorily desired not to be troubled again on the subject. Notwithstanding this interdiction, the duchess addressed another long letter of remonstrance and reproach to her royal mistress; after which she withdrew altogether from court, and retired to the lodge at Windsor, held by her in virtue of her office as keeper of the Great and Home Parks. Advantage was immediately taken of her absence to circulate a number of reports to her disadvantage, some of which reaching the ears of the duchess, she immediately returned to court, with the intention of exculpating herself before the queen. Anne received her with the greatest cold-

ness in the presence of the Duchess of Somerset and Mrs. Masham, and refused to grant a private audience. Unable to brook the sneers with which she was regarded, the proud duchess drew herself up to her utmost height, and glancing scornfully at Mrs. Masham, observed—"Since your majesty compels me to do so, I declare openly, and in the hearing of all, that the basest falsehoods have been propagated concerning me by your unworthy favourite, and that she now prevents my justification from being heard."

"It is false, duchess!" replied Mrs. Masham. "But for my intercession her majesty would not have received you, after your insolent letter to her."

"But for *your* intercession, minion!" cried the duchess, advancing towards her, and seizing her arm with violence. "Is it

come to this? Can I have indeed sunk so low, that you—a creature whom I have raised from abject poverty—should tell me that you have interfered in my behalf with the queen?"

"Duchess!" exclaimed the queen, angrily.

"You will find her out in time, madam," rejoined the duchess, "and you will then learn whom you have trusted. The best proof of her uneasiness is afforded by the fact that she dares not let me speak in private with you."

"I would spare her majesty a scene—that is my only motive for opposing the interview," replied Mrs. Masham.

"So you admit that you *do* control her majesty's actions, minion!" cried the duchess, bitterly. "She is governed by you—ha!"

"Whenever the queen deigns to consult

me, I give her the best counsel in my power," replied Mrs. Masham.

"And most pernicious counsel it is," observed the duchess, furiously, "venomous serpent that you are!"

"To put an end to this dispute, duchess," interposed Anne, with dignity, "I will grant you a final interview. Present yourself at six this evening."

"I thank your majesty," replied the duchess, "the rather that your permission is accorded against the expressed wishes of Mrs. Masham. You will bitterly repent the favour you have shewn her!"

"Her majesty cannot repent it more bitterly than she regrets the favours she has lavished upon you, duchess," observed Mrs. Masham, "and which have been requited by such base ingratitude."

"It is for her majesty to judge my con-

duct, and not you, minion!" cried the duchess, proudly. "I will justify myself to her, and to the whole nation. Nay, more; I will open her eyes to your duplicity and treachery."

"I am too secure of her majesty's good opinion, and too confident in my own honesty, to fear your threats, duchess," replied Mrs. Masham, derisively.

"Hypocrite!" exclaimed the duchess.

"Insolent!" responded Mrs. Masham.

"No more of this," cried the queen; "these broils distract me. I agreed to an interview with you, duchess, on the understanding that nothing more should pass here. If you persist in this quarrel, I withdraw my assent."

"I have done, madam," rejoined the duchess, restraining herself. "It shall not be said that I failed in proper respect to your

majesty; neither shall it be said that any court favourite insulted me with impunity. This evening, I shall not fail to avail myself of your gracious permission to wait upon you." And with a profound obeisance to the queen, and a look of haughty defiance at the others, she withdrew.

"Her insolence is insufferable!" exclaimed the queen. "I almost repent that I have promised to receive her."

"Why not retract the promise, then, madam?" said Abigail. "Bid her make her communication in writing."

"It shall be so," replied Anne, after a moment's hesitation.

"I am glad your majesty has so decided," said Mrs. Masham. "It is not likely that the duchess will be satisfied with the refusal; but it will convince her that she has nothing to expect."

And so it proved. The message being delivered to the duchess, she begged the queen to make a new appointment. "Your majesty cannot refuse me one last interview," she wrote; "neither can you be so unjust to an old and faithful servant as to deny her an opportunity of justifying herself before you. I do not desire any answer to my vindication, but simply a hearing."

"What shall I do, Masham?" said the queen to her favourite, who was present when the message was delivered.

"Decline to see her," replied Mrs. Masham; "but if she forces herself upon you, as will probably be the case, take her at her word, and do not vouchsafe any answer to her explanation, which, rely upon it, will rather be an attack upon others than a defence of herself."

"You are right, Masham," returned the queen. "I will follow your advice."

Mrs. Masham's conjecture proved just: on that same evening, without waiting for any reply from the queen, the duchess repaired to Saint James's Palace, and proceeding to the back staircase, of the door of which she still retained the key, mounted it, but was stopped on the landing by a page.

"Do you not know me, sir," cried the duchess, angrily.

"Perfectly, your grace," replied the page, bowing respectfully; "but I am forbidden to allow any one to pass through this door without her majesty's permission."

"And the Duchess of Marlborough especially, sir—eh?" she rejoined.

"It would be improper to contradict your grace," returned the page.

"Will you do me the favour, sir, to acquaint her majesty that I am here, and add, that I crave a few minutes' audience of her—only a few minutes," rejoined the duchess.

"I may incur her majesty's displeasure by so doing," answered the page. "Nevertheless, to oblige your grace, I will hazard it."

"Is the queen alone?" asked the duchess.

"Mrs. Masham, I believe, is with her," replied the page. "Her majesty has just dined."

"Mrs. Masham — ha!" exclaimed the duchess. "No matter. Take in the message, my good friend."

Nearly half an hour elapsed before the page returned, during which time the duchess was detained on the landing. Apologizing for the unavoidable delay, he begged her to follow him.

"You have tarried long enough to settle all that is to be said to me, sir," observed the duchess.

"I know nothing, your grace," replied the page, walking forward discreetly.

The next moment, the duchess was ushered into a cabinet, in which she found the queen alone.

"Good evening, duchess," said Anne. "I did not expect to see you. I was just about to write to you."

"I am sorry to intrude upon your majesty," replied the duchess; "but I have some important communications to make to you."

"Ah—indeed!" exclaimed Anne. "Can you not put them in writing?"

"They will be quickly told, gracious madam," said the duchess.

"Better write to me," interrupted Anne.

"But, madam——"

"Write—write," cried Anne, impatiently.

"Oh, madam! you are indeed changed, if you can use me thus!" cried the duchess. "You never yet, to my knowledge, refused to hear any petitioner speak, and yet you refuse me—your once favoured—once beloved friend. Be not alarmed, madam. I do not intend to trouble you on any subject disagreeable to you. I simply wish to clear myself from the imputations with which I have been charged."

"I suppose I must hear," cried Anne, with a gesture of impatience, and averting her head.

"Oh! not thus, madam," exclaimed the duchess—"not thus! For pity's sake, look at me. You were not used to be so hard-hearted. Evil counsellors have produced a baneful effect upon your gentle nature. Be

to me, if only for a few minutes, while I plead my cause, the Mrs. Morley you were of yore."

"No, duchess," replied Anne, in a freezing tone, and without looking at her—"all that is past. You have to thank yourself for the change which has been wrought in me."

"Hear me, madam," cried the duchess, passionately; "I have been much wronged before you—grievously wronged. There are those about you, whom I will not name, who have most falsely calumniated me. I am no more capable of saying aught against your majesty, than I am of taking the lives of my own offspring. Your name never passes my lips without respect—never, I take Heaven to witness!"

"You cannot impose upon me thus, duchess," said Anne, coldly. "Many false

things are told of you, no doubt, but I judge not of them so much as of your own deportment and discourse."

"I am willing to amend both, madam," returned the duchess.

"It is useless," said Anne, in the same tone as before.

"Is the quarrel, then, irreparable?" demanded the duchess. "Notwithstanding your majesty's assurance, I am certain my enemies have prevailed with you. Give me an opportunity of clearing myself. What has been told you?"

"I shall give you no answer," replied Anne.

"No answer, madam!" cried the duchess. —"Is this kind—is it just? Is it worthy of you to treat me thus? I do not ask the names of my accusers. Nay, I promise you not to retort upon them, if I should

suspect them. But tell me what I am charged with?"

"I shall give you no answer," replied the queen.

"Oh, madam — madam!" cried the duchess, "the cruel formula you adopt convinces me you have been schooled for the interview. Be your kind, good, gracious self, if only for a moment. Look at me, madam—look at me. I am not come here with any hope of winning my way back to your favour, for I know I have lost it irrecoverably; but I have come to vindicate my character as a faithful servant. You cannot refuse that plea, madam."

"You desired no answer, and you shall have none," replied the queen, rising, and moving towards the door.

"Oh! do not go, madam!" cried the duchess, following her, and throwing her-

self at her feet—"do not go, I implore of you."

"What would you more?" demanded Anne, coldly, and still with averted looks.

"I would make a last appeal to you, madam," said the duchess, as soon as she could command herself. "By all that is right and just, I implore you to answer me. Have I not despised my own interest in comparison with serving you well and faithfully? Have I ever disowned the truth? Have I ever played the hypocrite with you? Have I ever offended you, except by over-zeal, and vehemence—or, if you will, arrogance? If this is true, and it cannot be gainsaid, I am entitled to credit, when I avouch that my enemies have belied me behind my back. Do not turn a deaf ear to my entreaties, madam;

but tell me what I am charged with? Answer—oh, answer!"

"You compel me to reiterate my words," replied the queen. "You shall have no answer."

"You deny me common justice, madam," cried the duchess, losing all patience, "in refusing me a hearing—justice, which is due to the meanest of your subjects. You owe it to yourself to speak out."

"Just or unjust, I will give you no answer," replied the queen. "And here our conference must end."

"So be it, then," returned the duchess, resuming all her haughtiness. "I have loved you sincerely, madam—ay, sincerely—because I believed my affection requited; but since you have cast me off, I shall crush all feelings of regard for you within my breast. If you were but an instrument in

my hands, as some avouch, I at least used you to a noble purpose. Such will not be the case with her who now governs you. She will degrade you; and the rest of your reign will be as inglorious as its opening was splendid and triumphant. Let my words dwell upon your memory. Farewell —for ever, madam." And without another word, and without an obeisance, she quitted the apartment.

As soon as she was gone, Mrs. Masham entered from an adjoining chamber.

"Your majesty acted your part to admiration," she cried. "I did not give you credit for so much firmness."

"I had hard work to sustain my character," replied Anne, sinking into a chair. "I am truly thankful it is over."

"It is not yet quite over," said Mrs. Masham; "one step more requires to be taken."

"True," replied the queen, "I must call upon her to resign her places. But I do not like to give them to her daughters; and yet I believe I made a promise to that effect."

"Heed it not, madam," said Mrs. Masham. "Her grace has forfeited all title to further consideration on your part."

"I must own I should like to make you keeper of the privy purse, Masham," said Anne.

"And I admit I should like the place excessively, madam," replied Mrs. Masham.

"Would I could get rid of my scruples," said Anne, ruminating.

"I will relieve you of them, madam," replied Mrs. Masham. "The promise was extorted, and is therefore *not* binding."

"I will make another then, freely, that

shall be so, Masham," rejoined the queen. "You shall have the place."

"I am bound to you for ever, madam, by this and a thousand obligations," returned the artful favourite, in a tone, apparently, of the most fervent gratitude.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHAT MANNER THE GOLD KEY WAS DELIVERED UP BY THE DUCHESS.

THE duchess's dismissal, though fully resolved upon, as has just been shewn, was, with Anne's customary irresolution, long postponed. At length, however, on the duke's return from the campaign of 1710, it was resolved to bring matters to a crisis; and accordingly, when he waited upon her, the queen received him very coldly, studiously avoiding making any allusion to his

successes, but observing, with some harshness, "I trust your grace will not allow a vote of thanks to be moved to you in parliament this year, because my ministers will certainly oppose it."

"It pains me to hear your majesty speak thus," replied Marlborough. "Such unmerited honours have ever been unsought by me; and I have welcomed them chiefly because I thought they redounded to your glory. I shall take care to avoid them in future."

"You will do well, my lord," replied Anne.

"Here is a letter from the duchess, which she entreated me to present to your majesty," pursued the duke. "Will you deign to take it?"

"I pray you, excuse me," rejoined Anne, with freezing dignity; "all communication is closed between the duchess and myself."

"It is a letter of apology, madam," replied the duke—"of humble apology. Her grace wishes to give you an assurance, under her own hand, of her contrition for any faults she may have committed. She is willing and anxious to do anything that may be deemed reasonable, to prove the sincerity of her regrets; and since her presence has become irksome to your majesty, she is desirous of resigning her offices."

"I am glad to hear it, my lord," interrupted the queen, quickly.

"On the understanding, of course," pursued the duke, "that she is succeeded as groom of the stole by her eldest daughter, Lady Ryalton; and as keeper of the privy purse by Lady Sunderland. With your gracious permission, she would willingly retain the Great and Home parks, as well as her pension from the privy purse."

"I assent to the latter part of the proposition," replied the queen. "She shall have the parks and the pension, which will give her three thousand five hundred a-year; but the other offices I shall reserve for my friends."

"How, madam!" exclaimed the duke. "I trust it will not be necessary to remind you of your promise."

"It was extorted from me," replied the queen.

"Even if it were so, madam, which it was *not*," rejoined Marlborough, proudly, "your royal word once passed, should be kept."

"There must be some reservation in these matters, my lord," replied Anne, colouring; "my promise was conditional on her grace's good behaviour."

"Your pardon, madam," returned the

duke; "I have always been given to understand by the duchess—and she is incapable of asserting an untruth—that it was unconditional. Nay, the very nature of the boon bespeaks it to be so."

"My word is as good as that of the duchess, my lord," cried the queen, angrily; "though you would seem to insinuate the contrary."

"Your majesty misunderstands me," replied the duke. "I do not design to cast a shadow of imputation on your veracity. That you made the promise with the tacit understanding you describe, I am satisfied; but that the duchess was unconscious of any such mental reservation, I am equally satisfied. It is with this conviction that I beseech your majesty, on parting with your old friend and servant, not altogether to overlook her many services, nor give to strangers what is due to her."

"I have done all I think needful," said the queen; "and more, much more than I am advised to do. I accept her grace's resignation. You will bid her deliver up the gold key to me within three days."

Marlborough looked as if stricken by a thunderbolt.

"Three days!" he exclaimed. "If your majesty is indeed resolved upon the duchess's dismissal, and is deaf to my remonstrances, at least grant me an interval of ten days, during which I may concert means of rendering the blow less mortifying to her."

"On no account," replied the queen, alarmed. "I now repent giving so much time, and shall limit the space to two days."

"Well, it matters not, since it is to be," sighed the duke. "I would now speak to your majesty on another subject."

"Do not trouble yourself, my lord," replied the queen, sharply. "I will talk of nothing till I have the key."

"I take my leave, then, madam," replied the duke, "lamenting that I should have lived to see you so changed."

And he bowed and departed.

"Well, Masham," said the queen, as a side-door in the cabinet opened to admit the favourite, "are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly, madam," replied Mrs. Masham. "You will have the key to-night."

"You think so?" cried Anne.

"I am sure of it," returned the other. "I would not for all the honours the duke has gained be the bearer of your message to the duchess."

"Nor I," replied the queen, with a half smile.

Marlborough fully sympathized with these

opinions. He had never felt half the uneasiness before the most hazardous engagement he had fought, that he now experienced in the idea of facing his wife. He would willingly have broken the disagreeable intelligence he had to communicate, by a note, or in some indirect manner, but the duchess met him on his return, and rendered his intentions nugatory. Perceiving from his looks that something had gone wrong, she came at once to the point, and asked—"You have seen the queen—what says she?"

"Give me a moment to recover myself," replied Marlborough.

"If you are afraid to answer the question, I will do so for you," rejoined the duchess. "My resignation is accepted. Nay, do not seek to hide it from me; I know it."

"It is so," replied the duke.

"But she has granted the places to our daughters? At least she has done that?" cried the duchess.

"She refuses to fulfil her promise," returned Marlborough.

"Refuses! ha!" cried the duchess. "She is the first queen of England who has acted thus dishonourably. I will tell her so to her face. And all the world shall know it."

"Calm yourself," replied Marlborough. "This passion is useless. The queen requires the key within two days."

"She shall have it within two minutes," rejoined the duchess, snatching it from her side. "I will take it to her at once."

"But consider——" cried the duke.

"I will consider nothing," interrupted the duchess. "She shall at least know how much I hate and despise her. If I perish for uttering them, I will let her know my true sentiments."

"You shall not go forth in this state, Sarah," cried Marlborough, detaining her. "Tarry till you are calmer. Your violence will carry you too far."

"Are you, too, joined with them, my lord?" cried the duchess, furiously. "Let me go, I say! I will not be hindered! My indignation must out, or it will kill me."

"Go, then," replied the duke, releasing her. And as she rushed out of the room, while he sank upon the sofa, he ejaculated, "No rays of glory can gild a life darkened by tempests like these!"

Still in the same towering passion, the duchess reached the palace. In spite of all opposition, she forced herself into the antechamber of the cabinet, and Anne, who chanced to be there, had only time to retire precipitately, ere she entered. She found Mrs. Masham alone, who could ill disguise her uneasiness.

"Where is the queen?" demanded the latter.

"You see she is not here," replied Mrs. Masham. "But I must demand, in her name, the meaning of this strange and most unwarrantable intrusion."

"So you are the queen's representative, hussy!" cried the duchess. "It must be confessed that the majesty of England is well represented. But I will not bandy words with you. I wish to enter the cabinet, to speak with the queen."

"You shall not enter," replied Mrs. Masham, planting herself before the door.

"Dare you prevent me?" cried the duchess.

"Yes, I dare, and I do!" replied Mrs. Masham; "and if you advance another footstep, I will call the guard to remove you. Her majesty will not see you."

The duchess looked as if she meditated further violence, but at last controlled herself by a powerful effort. Glancing at Mrs. Masham with unutterable scorn, she said, "Your mistress has required the key from me. Take it to her." And as she spoke she flung it upon the ground.

"Say to her," she continued, "that she has broken her word — a reproach under which none of her royal predecessors have laboured. Say to her, also, that the love and respect I once entertained for her are changed to hatred and contempt."

And with a glance of defiance she quitted the room.

"Is she gone?" cried the queen, half opening the door, and peeping timidly into the room.

"She is, madam," replied Mrs. Masham, picking up the key; "and I am thankful

to say, she has left this behind her. At last, you are rid of her for ever."

"Heaven be thanked!" ejaculated Anne.

"Will it please you to take the key?" said Mrs. Masham.

"Keep it," replied Anne. "Henceforth you are comptroller of the privy purse. The Duchess of Somerset will be groom of the stole. But I have better things in store for you. The Duchess of Marlborough shall not insult you thus with impunity. On the earliest occasion, I will give your husband a peerage."

"The duchess says you do not keep your promises, madam," cried Mrs. Masham; "but I have found it otherwise."

"It is the duchess's own fault that I have not kept them with her," returned Anne. "I loved her once as well as you, Masham—nay, better."

CHAPTER XIV.

SHEWING HOW THE SERJEANT QUITTED THE SERVICE.

RECALLED to scenes of war in Flanders, the serjeant remained with his regiment till the termination of the campaign of 1711. He had been absent nearly two years, and having been severely wounded at the siege of Bouchain, in the autumn preceding his return, had been incapacitated from writing home; neither had he received, for nearly three months, tidings from those in whom he was

interested, in consequence of which his heart misgave him so much, that he determined before proceeding to Marlborough House, to seek out Proddy. Accordingly, he repaired to the palace, and inquiring for the coachman, was told he was in his room, whither he directed his steps. Full of the pleasurable surprise which he imagined his appearance would occasion the coachman, he entered the room, and closing the door after him, made a military salute to Proddy, who was seated beside a table, in a semi-somnolent state, with a pipe in his mouth, and a mug of ale before him. On raising his eyes, and beholding the unlooked-for apparition, the coachman dropped his pipe, pushed his chair back, and with eyes almost starting out of their sockets, and teeth chattering, remained gazing at him, the very picture of terror and astonishment.

"What!—don't you know me?" cried Scales, greatly surprised.

"I *did* know you once, serjeant," gasped Proddy; "but I don't desire any further acquaintance with you."

"Pooh — pooh!" cried the serjeant; "What's the matter?—what are you afraid of? You must come with me."

"Oh, no, thank'ee—much obleeged, all the same," replied Proddy, getting as far back as possible.

"Well, if you wont go with me, I must stay with you," replied Scales, taking a chair. "I don't mean to leave you any more, Proddy."

"You don't!" exclaimed the coachman, with a look of increased affright.

"No, we shall part no more," replied Scales. "I've got a pretty long furlough, now."

"Why, you don't mean to say they give leave of absence from below?" cried Proddy.

"From below!" echoed the serjeant.

"Oh, I see—you mean from the Low Countries."

"You may call it by that name if you please," rejoined Proddy; "but we generally give it another and less pleasin' happerlation."

"Well, we wont quarrel about names," returned the serjeant. What I mean to say is, I'm no longer in the service. I'm the same as a dead man."

"I know it," returned Proddy, shuddering.

"But I shan't give up my former habits," said Scales. "I shall beat the drum, as heretofore—and clean the duke's boots. I shall still haunt the old spot."

"Oh, don't—don't!" cried Proddy.

"Why not?" returned the serjeant. "Has anythin' happened to prevent me? Why do you stare so hard at me, man? D'ye think me altered?"

"Not so much as I expected," replied Proddy.

"I dare say I *am* changed," ruminated the serjeant. "The last three months have tried me hard. I've had terrible quarters—hot as h——"

"Oh, don't mention it," interrupted the coachman. "What a relief it must be to get away!"

"You'd think so if you tried it," replied Scales. "How cool and comfortable you feel here! I shall often pass an hour with you."

Proddy groaned audibly.

"By the by," pursued the serjeant,

"talkin' of my looks, do you think they'll find me changed?"

"What, the women-folk?" cried Proddy. "Do you mean to appear to them?"

"Of course,—and this very night," returned Scales.

"Lord help 'em!" cried Proddy; "how frightened the poor creaters will be. It's as much as I can do to bear you. Why, you don't mean to say you care for 'em now?"

"Not care for 'em!" replied Scales. "It's anxiety about 'em as has brought me to you!"

"Well, this beats everythin'," said Proddy. "I thought your last bullet must ha' settled that long ago."

"Not a bit of it," replied Scales. "Here's your health, and glad to see you, Proddy!" he added, taking up the mug and emptying

it, very much, apparently, to his satisfaction.

"What! can a ghost drink ale?" cried Proddy, in surprise.

"Why, zounds! you don't take me for a ghost, sure*ly?*" cried the serjeant, looking up.

"I *did*," replied the coachman, drawing nearer to him; "but I begin to think I must be mistaken. We heard you were killed at the siege o' Bushin."

"Wounded, but not killed, Proddy," replied the serjeant. "My hurt was at first supposed mortal; but here I am, as you see, alive and kicking."

"Oddsbodikins! how delighted I am!" cried the coachman, throwing his arms round his neck. "I never expected to behold you again."

"Well, I thought your reception raythier

odd," said the serjeant, as soon as he had extricated himself from his friend's embrace. "So you took me for a sperrit, eh!—very flatterin', ha! ha! You ought to have known that ghosts never walk in broad daylight—to say nothin' o' my substantial and earthly appearance."

"I was puzzled woundily, I must own," returned Proddy; "but arter the han'kicher stained wi' blood, and torn into two pieces, which you sent home to Mrs. Plumpton and Mrs. Tipping, none of us could doubt your disserlution."

"Eh! what!" cried the serjeant. "Do *they* think me dead, too?"

"To be sure," replied Proddy. "There came a letter from the fifer o' your regiment, Tom Jiggins—him as played at your 'Drum,' you remember, enclosing the bloody relics, and saying you was grieviously wounded, and couldn't recover."

"But I *have* recovered, howsomedever," replied the serjeant. "Poor Tom Jiggins! two days after he wrote the letter, he was shot through the head by a carabineer."

"Poor fellow!" echoed Proddy; "then *he* really is dead?"

"Dead as your great-grandfather, if you ever had one," replied Scales. "But I'll tell you how my mischance came about. Bouchain, you must know, is a strongly fortified town, with the river Sanzet flowing right through it, and the Scheld almost washin' its walls. Round about it, there are broad, deep ditches, filled to the brim wi' the waters o' the two streams I've mentioned, and besides these, there are miles o' great flat swamps capable of inundation, so that the place is as difficult of approach as a besieged garrison could desire. Our general's object, you must understand, after investing the place, was to draw a line o'

circumwallation round it; but, in accomplishin' this, he experienced great obstacles. It would be no use tellin' you how Marshal Villars, who was posted wi' his army in the open space betwixt the two rivers, threw bridges across the Sanzet — and how we demolished 'em—how entrenchments were constructed under General Albergotti, by means o' which, and the batteries o' Bouchain, Villars intended to sweep the intermediate ground wi' a cross-fire—how the duke passed over the Scheld in the night-time to interrupt these operations, and how he was foiled by the Marshal, and obligated to return—how he covered the front from Haspres to Ivry wi' a line of redoubts and lunettes—and again crossed the Scheld at the head o' fifty battalions, and as many squadrons—when perceivin' that the enemy were rapidly extendin' their works, he

ordered the line o' circumwallation to be forthwith commenced between their entrenchments and the town. Upon which, four thousand men were set to work, and notwithstandin' a heavy fire from the garrison, and repeated volleys from the hostile entrenchments, the line o' circumwallation was continued to the inundation o' the Sanzet——"

"Come to the point, serjeant," interrupted Proddy. "Your circumwallations and nunindations confuse me sadly."

"To make a long story short," replied Scales, laughing, "the Marshal, finding himself driven hard, was more than ever anxious to keep up a communication with the garrison; and he contrived to introduce a reinforcement o' fusileers into it by means o' a small dam, together wi' a supply of powder and flour, of which they were run-

nin' short. Havin' accomplished this, he next attempted to fortify the dam by means o' fascines attached to an avenue of willows, though the water was at least four feet deep."

"D—n the dam," cried Proddy. "I'm a-gettin' out o' *my* depth again."

"I'll land you presently," returned Scales. "Behind the dam ran a cattle-track, on which were posted four companies o' French grenadiers, together wi' the king's brigade, to protect the work. To dislodge these troops, and check the operations of the workmen, was the duke's object. Accordingly, a fascine road was made across the inundated morass; and under cover o' night, six hundred British grenadiers, sustained by eight battalions o' infantry, made the attempt. It was a hazardous enterprise; for we had to wade for near a quarter

of a mile, sometimes up to the middle, and sometimes up to the very shoulders in water, and to keep our muskets high and dry above our heads all the time. Two-thirds of the distance had been safely accomplished, when the duke, who was with us, and who had been sufferin' from ague, began to feel fatigued. I besought him to mount upon my shoulders; he consented; and, nerved wi' the glorious burthen, I pressed forward wi' redoubled ardour. It was impossible to advance so silently as not to betray our approach to the enemy; and when we came within shot, they fired a volley at us, but, owing to the darkness, it did little execution. A ball, however, had struck me in the breast; but I said nothing about it, determined to go on as long as my strength lasted. Despite my exhaustion, I was the first to reach the traverse, where

I deposited the duke, and then dropped, luckily not into the water, or I must ha' been drowned. I had no share, as you may suppose, in what followed; but I afterwards learnt that the French were compelled to evacuate their posts, while the duke was enabled to extend the road across the marsh, and so complete the circumwallation."

"Bray-vo!" exclaimed Proddy, rapturously. "I'm sure the duke didn't forget you, serjeant."

"Hear it out, and then you'll learn," replied Scales. "When I came round, I found myself in my tent, whither I had been conveyed by the duke's orders, and with the surgeon dressin' my wounds. I asked him what he thought o' my case; and he said that, knowin' as how I didn't fear death, he must say he thought my chance

but a poor un. 'Very well,' says I, 'I shan't go unprepared.' So I sends for Tom Jiggins, and I bids him write a farewell letter for me to the two women; and I tears the han'kercher, with which the blood had been stanched, in two, and encloses a half to each of 'em. This done, I felt more comfortable. Half an hour afterwards, the duke himself came to see me, and expressed the greatest concern at my sitivation. 'I owe my life to you, my brave fellow,' he said; 'and if you recover, I'll give you your discharge, and make you comfortable for the rest o' your days. Live for my sake.' 'Always obey orders, general,' I replied; 'since you command me to live, I *will* live.' And so I did."

"Bray-vo, again!" exclaimed Proddy. "Walour ought to be rewarded. I've no doubt when I'm superanivated, and no

longer able to drive, that her majesty 'll perwide for me."

"No doubt of it," returned Scales. "Well, as soon as I was able to be moved, I was taken to the hospital at Douay, where I remained till the end o' the campaign. I wasn't able to write, but I got a comrade to indite a letter for me; but I dare say it miscarried."

"Most likely," said Proddy.

"It's an awkward question to ask," said Scales, hesitating; "but did the women seem at all afflicted at the news o' my supposed death?"

"Werry much," replied Proddy—"werry much, especially Mrs. Plumpton. Mrs. Tipping cried a good deal at first, but her eyes soon got as bright as ever. As to Mrs. Plumpton, she looks like a disconsolate widow."

"Poor soul!" cried Scales. "Poor soul!"

"I may say a word for myself, serjeant," pursued Proddy; "I was as much grieved as if I'd lost a brother."

"Thank'ee—thank'ee!" cried Scales, in a tone of emotion, and grasping his hand with great cordiality. "You are a true friend."

"You've just come back in time, serjeant, if you still have any likin' for Mrs. Tipping," remarked Proddy, significantly.

"How so?" asked Scales, becoming suddenly grave. "Isn't she true to her colours, eh?"

"She encourages Bamby a great deal more than I like," replied Proddy; "and I've been half expectin' her to throw herself away upon him."

"The devil!" exclaimed Scales, angrily.

"That little rascal is always in the way. But I'll settle him this time."

"I say, serjeant," said Proddy, after a moment's reflection; "have you made up your mind which of the two women you'll take for a wife?"

"Pretty nearly," replied Scales; "but why do you ask, Proddy?"

"For a partik'ler reason o' my own," returned the coachman.

"Very likely I may decide to-night," said Scales. "Do you mind which I choose?"

"Oh, no; it's quite immaterial to me," answered Proddy, with an air of unconcern, "quite immaterial."

"An idea has just struck me, Proddy," said the serjeant; "they suppose me dead. What if I appear to 'em as a ghost, to-night?"

"Don't frighten 'em too much," replied

the coachman, "or the consequences may be ser'ous. I know how I felt just now. But how will you contrive it?"

"Oh, it's easily managed," replied the serjeant. "As soon as it becomes dark, I can steal into the house unperceived, and get into my den."

"You'll find it undisturbed," said the coachman. "Mrs. Plumpton wouldn't suffer a single article in it to be moved. She cleans it regularly."

"Bless her!" exclaimed Scales, in a voice rendered hoarse with emotion.

"Bamby and Savagejohn are sure to be there to-night," pursued Proddy, "so that any scheme o' wengeance you may meditate can be put into execution."

"All falls out as I could desire," said Scales. "Now, then, let's lay our heads together, and arrange our plans of attack."

"First of all, let me get you a pipe, and replenish the mug," said the coachman.

This done, they held a close conference, which lasted till about eight o'clock in the evening, by which time they had smoked nearly a dozen pipes, and discussed at least three mugs of strong ale. They then thought it time to set forth, and while Scales stole into Marlborough House, through the garden gate in Saint James's Park, Proddy entered boldly from Pall Mall.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE SERJEANT'S GHOST APPEARS TO HIS OLD FRIENDS; AND IN WHICH MRS. PLUMPTON AND MRS. TIPPING FIND EACH A HUSBAND.

PREPARATIONS were making for supper, and most of the household were assembled in the servants' hall, including, of course, Fishwick, Parker, Brumby, and Timperley. Neither Mrs. Plumpton nor Mrs. Tipping, however, were present; but as Proddy was inquiring after them, the last-named tripped into the room. She had evidently been taking unusual pains with her toilette, and it must be

confessed, looked extremely piquante and pretty. A rose-coloured paduasoy dress, with short open sleeves edged with crows-foot, displayed her trim little figure; a laced cap and lappets adorned her head; and a patch here and there set off her complexion and heightened the brilliancy of her eyes. Her roguish and coquettish air proclaimed that she was bent upon conquest.

"You expect Mounseer Bambyloo, I see," said the coachman.

"Why, yes; it's just possible he may come," replied Mrs. Tipping; "he and Corporal Sauvageon generally drop in about supper-time; and very pleasant company we finds 'em."

"Werry pleasant, indeed!" echoed Proddy, drily. "You seem to have quite forgotten the poor serjeant."

"The serjeant! puff!" cried Mrs. Tip-

ping. "What should I think about him for, eh? Would you have me sit sighin' and groanin' all day, like that poor fool Plumpton?"

"Ay; she's a model o' constancy," said Proddy; "there are few o' your sex like her."

"The fewer the better, to my thinkin'," cried Mrs. Tipping, spitefully. "Oh, here she comes! I declare it gives one the wapours to look at her."

As she spoke, Mrs. Plumpton entered the room. She was clad in deep mourning, and evinced by her altered demeanour, the sincerity of her affliction.

"You must take care o' yourself, my dear Mrs. Plumpton," said the coachman, kindly; "you are quite-a-losin' your good looks."

"Why should I preserve them, supposing

that I ever had any?" she answered, with a melancholy smile.

"You may find another admirer—one you may like as well as the serjeant," he urged.

"Never!" she replied, firmly.

"Mrs. Tipping has done so," he said, glancing maliciously at the lady's maid.

"Mrs. Tipping is no rule for me," returned Mrs. Plumpton, gravely.

At this moment, a great shuffling in the passage announced the arrival of Bimbelot and Sauvageon. The former was dressed with extraordinary smartness, wore a laced velvet coat, diamond, or what looked like diamond, buckles, speckled silk stockings, a full-bottomed peruke, a clouded cane, and a silver-hilted sword. He was patched and perfumed as usual, and carried his feathered hat in the points of his fingers.

Nodding in reply to the little Frenchman's bow, Proddy inquired gruffly, "if he had got a place, seein' he was so sprucely rigged out?"

"Oui, mon cher Proddy, oui," he replied; "I have got a new place, certainly; but I am no longer a valet. I am employed by my Lord Oxford."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed the coachman. "May I ask, in what capacity?"

"I regret I cannot answer you; c'est un secret," he replied, mysteriously, "un grand secret."

"But you will tell me?" said Mrs. Tipping.

"Tout à l'heure, ma chère," he replied; "dans un tête-à-tête. Oh! I must tell you, I have sush a sharming aventure dis mornin' on the Mall. I meet sush a pretty lady, and she give me sush tender glances. Oh, ma foi!"

"And you returned them, no doubt?" said Mrs. Tipping, in a tone of pique.

"Oh! mon Dieu! oui," cried Bimbelot. "You wouldn't have me insensible to a lady's advances! Ven she ogle me, I ogle her again."

"Very pretty proceedings, indeed!" cried Mrs. Tipping, bridling up. "And you've the audacity to tell me this to my face?"

"Au, pauvre chérie—dear little jealous fool!" cried Bimbelot; "don't fly into a passion."

"Leave me alone — I don't wish to speak to you — I hate you!" cried Mrs. Tipping.

"Au contraire, chère petite; you love me so mush you can't live vidout me," rejoined Bimbelot. "Soyez raisonnable, cher ange."

"Vain coxcomb!" muttered Mrs. Tipping. "I'll lower his pride."

At this moment supper was announced. Bimbelot offered his arm to Mrs. Tipping, but she turned from him disdainfully, and took that of Proddy.

The supper passed off pleasantly enough, for Mrs. Tipping, to mortify Bimbelot, chattered incessantly to Proddy; and the latter, who was secretly anticipating the fun that was to ensue, was in high good-humour. The only person who seemed out of place was Mrs. Plumpton. She sat silent and abstracted, ate little or nothing, and neither the lively sallies of Bimbelot, nor the tender assiduities of Sauvageon, who still continued to pay court to her, could draw a smile or a word from her. But an occurrence took place which somewhat altered the complexion of the party. When supper was

nearly over, a loud knocking was heard at the outer door of the passage, and Timperley got up to answer the summons.

"Who can it be, I wonder?" said Proddy, wondering whether the serjeant had made any alteration in his plans.

"Perhaps it's the fair lady that Monsieur Bimbelot met this morning on the Mall," observed Mrs. Tipping, maliciously.

"Oh non, ce n'est cette dame, j'en suis sur," replied Bimbelot, with an uneasy look.

"It's a woman, however," cried Fishwick, as female tones in a high and angry key were heard in the passage.

As the voice reached his ears, the little Frenchman turned pale, and rose suddenly.

"Bon soir, messieurs et mesdames," he stammered; "I feel very ill; de supper disagree vid me—bon soir!"

"Stop a bit," cried Proddy, laying hold of his arm. "What's the matter?"

There was a slight struggle heard outside, and a shrill female voice exclaimed, "Let me come in! I know he's here. I *will* see him."

"Oh, je suis perdu!" cried Bimbelot, with a distracted look at Sauvageon; "c'est elle! Vat sall I do?—vere sall I go?"

"Sit down, I tell you," cried Proddy, still detaining him in his grasp.

"No, I tank you — no; I must go," cried Bimbelot. And in his efforts to extricate himself, he pulled the coachman backwards upon the floor, while his own coat was rent in the effort up to the very shoulders. Just at this moment, an enraged female burst into the room, and shaking her hand menacingly at Bimbelot, who retreated from her, cried, "I knew

you were here. Oh, you base little deceiver!"

And she forthwith proceeded to pull off his peruke, and cuff him tremendously about the ears.

"Pardon — pardon, ma chère," cried Bimbelot. "C'est la dernier fois. I vill never do so again—never, je te jure!"

"I know better," cried the lady. "You've deceived me too often. Oh, you wicked little creature!—there's for you!" And she gave him a sounding buffet, that made him put his hand to his ear.

"He has deceived me as well as you, ma'am," said Mrs. Tipping, getting up, and boxing him on the other side.

"He hasn't married you, I hope," cried the strange lady. "If so, I'll hang him for bigamy."

"No, he's only perposed," replied Mrs. Tipping.

"That's nearly as bad," cried Madame Bimbelot.

"Very nearly," replied Mrs. Tipping. "Oh, you base little wretch!"

Upon which, they both began to box him again, while Bimbelot vainly endeavoured to shelter his head with his hands.

"We'll teach you to play these tricks again," cried Madame Bimbelot.

"Yes, we'll teach you," added Mrs. Tipping.

The well-merited punishment of the little Frenchman gave great entertainment to the spectators, and even drew a smile from Mrs. Plumpton. Proddy, who had got up from the floor, was so convulsed with laughter, that he had to hold his sides. At length, however, thinking the chastisement had proceeded far enough, he good-naturedly interfered.

"Come, come, ladies, let him alone," he

said. "You, at least, ought not to be so hard upon him, Mrs. Tipping, for you're quite as much to blame as him."

"I don't doubt it," cried Madame Bimbelot," gazing spitefully at her. "I dare say she gave him every encouragement."

"Oui ma chère," cried Bimbelot, piteously, "dat she did."

"Oh! you base hypocritical little monster!" cried Mrs. Tipping, in a fresh access of passion. "Didn't you give me to understand you were single?"

"Well, never mind if he did," said Proddy; "you can't misunderstand him now. Come, make it up, and let us finish supper."

Fishwick and Brumby, joining their solicitations to those of Proddy, peace was at length restored; and Bimbelot, having resumed his peruke, sat down again with a

very crestfallen air. Madame Bimbelot was accommodated with a seat near Mr. Parker. Now that she was a little more composed, and the company were at leisure to examine her features more narrowly, she proved to be a very fine woman—a little erring on the score of *embonpoint*, but far surpassing Mrs. Tipping in attraction. She was very tawdrily dressed in a blue and silver sack, highly rouged, with her neck considerably exposed, and covered, as were her cheeks, with patches. Her features were small, but excessively pretty, the mouth inclining to the voluptuous, and the eyes bright and tender. Her hair was powdered, and dressed in the *tête de mouton* style. As Proddy looked at her, he thought he had seen her before, but could not recollect when, or under what circumstances. Madame Bimbelot wanted little pressing

from Parker to partake of the supper. She ate of everything offered her—cold fowl, ham, game pie, pickled oysters, stewed cheese, fish *rechauffée;* and when the butler himself thought she must be satiated, begged for a taste of the corned-beef,—it was so very tempting,—and devoured a large plateful. Notwithstanding this inordinate display of appetite, her charms produced a sensible effect upon Mr. Parker, and without saying a word, he went in search of some choice old Madeira, which he kept in a little press in his pantry. Returning with a bottle under each arm, he drew the cork of one of them, filled a bumper for Madame Bimbelot, who, requiting the attention with a tender look, tossed it off in a twinkling, and held out the glass to be replenished. Parker gallantly complied, drank a bumper to her health,

and passed the bottle round the table. The effect of this generous wine on the company was magical and instantaneous. All tongues were loosened at once, and the conversation became loud and general. Even Bimbelot recovered his spirits, and ventured to cast an imploring look at Mrs. Tipping, who, however, took no notice of him, but put on her most captivating airs to Proddy. One person only amid this noisy assemblage was silent—one person only refused the wine—need it be said it was Mrs. Plumpton? As time flew on, and the bottle went round, Mr. Parker seemed to grow more and more enamoured of Madame Bimbelot; they drew their chairs close together, whispered in each other's ears, and a complete flirtation seemed to be established between them.

"I say, Bamby," said Proddy, nudging him, "where are your eyes, man? Don't

you see what love Mr. Parker is a-makin' to your wife?"

"He does me great honour," replied Bimbelot, shrugging his shoulders with an air of supreme indifference. "A jealous husband is a fool."

"Well, he has *one* recommendation, at all events," observed Mrs. Tipping. "I suppose *you* would be jealous, Mr. Proddy?"

"Of you,—werry," replied the coachman, with a slight wink.

"La, Mr. Proddy, how am I to understand that?"

"I'll tell you more about it an hour hence," returned the coachman.

"Oh gimini! you quite confuse me," she rejoined, casting down her eyes, and forcing a blush.

In this way another hour passed. More Madeira was brought by Parker, who was

unwilling to let the flame he had excited expire for want of aliment. Proddy discovered beauties in Mrs. Tipping which he had never discerned before, and the lady on her part almost gave him to understand that if he found his bachelor life solitary she was ready to enliven it with her society. All were extremely happy and comfortable, and all apparently very unwilling to separate.

About this time, Proddy cast his eye towards the clock, and seeing it only wanted a few minutes to twelve, thought it high time to turn the conversation into another channel.

"Mrs. Plumpton," he said, calling to her across the table in a voice calculated to attract general attention — "I hope you haven't lost the poor serjeant's han'kercher."

"Lost it!—oh no," she replied, drawing

forth the ensanguined fragment, "it's my only comfort now."

"I've mine safe enough, too," said Mrs. Tipping, drawing the other half from her pocket. "Here it is—heigho!" And she heaved a deep sigh.

"Those are the halves of a han'kercher sent home by poor Serjeant Scales when he was mortally wounded," observed Parker to Madame Bimbelot. "They're stainded with his blood."

"So I see," she replied. "How purely shocking!"

"Talkin' o' the serjeant," said Proddy, mysteriously, "somethin' werry extraordinary happened to me last night."

"About the serjeant?" cried Mrs. Plumpton, starting.

"About the serjeant," replied Proddy, still more mysteriously.

"In Heaven's name what is it?" demanded Mrs. Plumpton, eagerly.

"Thus adjured, I must speak," replied the coachman, in a solemn tone, "but I don't expect you to believe me."

There was a general movement of curiosity, and all conversation ceased. Mrs. Plumpton seemed as if her very being were suspended.

"I had been a-bed and asleep, as far as I can guess, about an hour," proceeded Proddy, "when I suddenly waked up wi' a strange and unaccountable feelin' o' dread about me. Why, I can't tell, but somehow the poor serjeant came into my head, and I thought of his lyin' far avay in a gory grave."

"Oh, dear!" cried Mrs. Plumpton, bursting into tears, and pressing the handkerchief to her lips.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" sobbed Mrs. Tipping, folding up her half, preparatory to putting it into her pocket.

"Don't cry, ladies, or I can't go on," said Proddy. "Well, I was a-thinkin' of the serjeant in this way, and a-tremblin' all over, when all of a sudden, wi' a rattlin' o' rings, that made my blood rush to my 'art, the curtains was drawn back, and I saw—*the serjeant!*"

"The serjeant!" exclaimed Mrs. Plumpton.

"Or rayther his ghost," replied Proddy. "There he was, lookin' as pale as a corpse, and holdin' his hand to his left breast, just where the bullet as caused his death struck him. I tried to speak, but my tongue clove to the roof o' my mouth, and I couldn't get out a word. After lookin' at me steadfastly for a short time, the spirit says, in a hollow voice, 'You wonder what

I'm a-come for, Proddy. I'll tell you. I want that 'ere torn han'kercher again. I must have it to-morrow night."

"Oh dear! did he say so?" cried Mrs. Plumpton.

"Here's my half," screamed Mrs. Tipping; "I wouldn't keep it another minute for the world."

"And what happened next?" asked Fishwick.

"Nothin'," replied Proddy. "The happarition wanished."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" asked Mrs. Plumpton, reproachfully.

"I didn't want to spoil the pleasure of the evenin'," answered Proddy; "besides, I thought midnight the fittest season for a ghost story."

As he spoke, the clock struck twelve, —slowly and solemnly.

There was a deep silence. Each one

looked round anxiously, and Mrs. Tipping whispered to Proddy, that she was sure the lights burned blue.

All at once, the ruffle of a drum was heard, proceeding apparently from the other end of the passage. Every one started, and the women with difficulty repressed a scream.

It was a strange, mysterious, hollow, death-like sound.

Rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-ra-ra ! — rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-ra-ra !

Then it stopped.

" Surely, my ears haven't deceived me?" cried Fishwick. " I heerd a drum."

" Oh, yes, I heerd it plain enough," returned Brumby, " and so did all the others."

" Oh, yes; we all heard it," they rejoined.

There was a pause for a few moments, during which no one spoke. Alarm and anxiety were depicted in every countenance.

Again the drum was heard, but more hollowly than before.

Rat-atat-atat-a-rara ! Rat-atat-atat-a-rara!

"It's the serjeant's call," cried Proddy. "I shall go to his room. Who will accompany me?"

There was no reply for a moment. At length Mrs. Plumpton got up, and answered—"I will."

"Don't be so wentersome!" cried Fishwick; "you don't know what you may see."

"I shall see *him*, and that will be sufficient," replied Mrs. Plumpton.

"I should like to go, if I durst," said

Mrs. Tipping, her curiosity getting the better of her fears; "but I'm sure I should faint."

"I'll take care of you," said Proddy.

"We'll all go," said Fishwick; "we'll see whether it really is a ghost."

"Yes, we'll all go," rejoined the others.

At this moment, the drum sounded for the third time, but so hollowly and dismally, that the hearers shrank back aghast.

Rat-atat-atat-arara! Rat-atat-atat-arara!

"Come away," cried Proddy, taking Mrs. Plumpton under one arm, and Mrs. Tipping under the other.

"Yes, we're all a-comin'," replied Fishwick, half repenting his temerity.

Emboldened, however, by numbers, he followed Proddy and his companions down the passage. Parker and Madame Bimbelot brought up the rear, and the lady was

so terrified, that the butler found it necessary to pass his arm round her waist, to support her, though his own apprehension did not prevent him from stealing a kiss,—an impropriety which escaped the notice of her husband, no lights having been brought with them. All was silent, for the beating of the drum had ceased. Arrived at the door of the den, Proddy paused before it. It was a thrilling moment, and Mrs. Tipping declared she was ready to faint.

After a brief delay, the door was thrown open, and a cry of terror was raised by all the spectators as they beheld the serjeant at the end of the room. There he stood, erect as in life, in his full regimentals, with his three-cornered hat on his head, his sword by his side, and a drum-stick in either hand. Before him, on his three-legged stool, was his drum. The black patch was still visible

on his nose, so was the other on his forehead. A lamp, placed out of sight in a corner, threw a ghastly green glimmer upon his face, which had been whitened with pipe-clay.

At the sight of this frightful spectre, a universal cry of alarm was raised by the beholders. Mrs. Tipping screamed aloud, and threw herself into the arms of the coachman, while Madame Bimbelot sank into those of Parker, who carried her off as fast as he could to the servants' hall.

Amid this terror and confusion the spectre struck the drum.

Rat-a-tat!

"What d'ye want?" demanded Proddy.

Rat-a-tat-a-r-r-r-r-a-r-a!

"What d'ye want, I say?" repeated Proddy, as the hollow ruffle died away.

"My han'kercher," answered the ghost in a sepulchral tone.

"Here's my half," said Mrs. Plumpton.

"Give him mine," murmured Mrs. Tipping to Proddy.

"You must give it yourself," replied the coachman; "the sperrit wont take it from any other hand."

"I da-r-r-r-aren't," she rejoined.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Plumpton had advanced slowly and tremblingly, and holding out the fragment of the handkerchief. When she came within reach, the ghost stretched out its arms, and folded her to its breast.

"He's alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Plumpton; "alive!" And she became insensible.

"Halloa, Proddy!" shouted Scales, in most unspiritual tones; "she has fainted. Some water—quick!"

"Why, what the devil's the meaning o' this?" cried Fishwick. "Are you alive, serjeant?"

"Alive?—to be sure I am," he replied.

"But stand aside for a moment. You shall have a full explanation presently."

And hurrying off with his burthen, he was followed by most of the spectators, who could scarcely credit their senses.

"Oh! good gracious, Mr. Proddy," cried Mrs. Tipping, who had remained behind with the coachman. "Is the serjeant come to life again?"

"He has never been dead at all," replied Proddy.

"Not dead!" echoed Mrs. Tipping. "Oh, then, let's go after 'em immediately." And she flew to the servants' hall, where she found the others crowding round the serjeant and Mrs. Plumpton.

A little water sprinkled in the housekeeper's face revived her. As she opened her eyes, she gazed fondly and inquiringly at the serjeant.

"I see how it is," she murmured; "you have played me this trick to try my fidelity."

"At all events, it has quite satisfied me of it," replied Scales, pressing her to his heart. "I'll tell you how I recovered from my wound, which at first was supposed mortal, anon. At present, I shall only say that I have quitted the service—that my noble master has promised to provide for me—that I mean to take a wife—and that wife, if you will have me, shall be yourself. How say you?"

She buried her face in his bosom.

"Serjeant!" exclaimed Mrs. Tipping, reproachfully.

"You're too late," said Proddy, detaining her. "Since you've come to the resolution o' marryin', I can't do better than follow your example; and since you've at last made a choice, the only difficulty I had

is removed. Mrs. Tipping, have you any objection to become Mrs. Proddy?"

"None in the world," she replied; "on the contrary, it will give me a great deal of pleasure."

"Then we'll be married at the same time as our friends," said the coachman.

"And that'll be the day after to-morrow," cried Scales; "I can't delay my happiness any longer."

"Pray accept my best compliments and congratulations, mon cher sergent," said Bimbelot, stepping forward.

"And mine, too, mon brave sergent," added Sauvageon, advancing.

"I had an account to settle with you, gentlemen," said Scales, stiffly; "but I'm too happy to think of it."

"Oh! pray don't trouble yourself," replied Bimbelot. "Allow me to present

Madame Bimbelot. Angelique, ma chère, où es tu?"

"Madame's too much engaged with Mr. Parker to attend to you," replied Proddy.

"So it seems," said Bimbelot, with a disconcerted look.

At this moment, the door suddenly opened, and two tall men, of stern appearance, with great-coats buttoned to the throat, pistols in their belts, and hangers at their sides, entered without ceremony. They were followed by an elderly man in a clerical cassock, and a female about the same age.

"Hippolyte Bimbelot," said one of the men, advancing, "and you, Achille Sauvageon, we arrest you of high treason in the queen's name. Here is our warrant."

"Arrêté!" exclaimed Bimbelot, in extremity of terror. "Oh, mon Dieu! what for?"

"You are accused of treasonable correspondence with France," replied the messenger. "Come along. We have a coach outside. We learnt at your lodgings that you were here."

"Ma pauvre femme!" cried Bimbelot. "Vat vill become of her, if I'm taken to prison!"

"Don't be uneasy about her—I'll take care of her," rejoined Parker.

"Here are two of her relations, who wanted to see her, so we brought 'em with us," said the messenger.

"Jelly!" cried the elderly lady, rushing forward, "don't you know me—don't you know your poor distracted father?"

"What, mamma, is it you?" cried Madame Bimbelot. "Well, this is purely strange."

"I meant to scold you severely," cried Mrs. Hyde, embracing her, and shedding tears, "but I find I cannot."

"Come along," said the messenger, laying hold of Bimbelot's shoulder. "We can't wait here any longer."

"Eh bien, I sall go," replied Bimbelot; "but you'll find yourself in de wrong box, bientôt. Mr. Harley vill take up my case."

"Why, it's by Mr. Harley's order you are arrested," rejoined the messenger, with a brutal laugh.

"Oh dear, it's all over vid us," groaned Bimbelot. Ve sall be hang like de pauvre Greg."

"Most likely," replied the messenger. "Come along." And he dragged forth Bimbelot, while his companion led out Sauvageon.

As this was passing, Angelica threw herself at her father's feet, and with tears in her eyes implored his forgiveness.

"I will forgive you, my child," he said,

"and grant you my blessing, on one condition—namely, that you return with us into the country at once. The Essex wagon starts from the 'George,' Shoreditch, at three o'clock to-morrow morning. Will you go by it?"

"Willingly, father," she replied, rising; "willingly. I have not known a day's real contentment since I left your roof."

"Then you shall have my blessing," cried her father, extending his arms over her.

"And mine, too," added her mother.

And fearing if they tarried longer that her resolution might change, they took a hasty leave of the company, and hurried to the George, from whence they left for Essex in the wagon about two hours afterwards.

Angelica, it may be added, became a totally changed person. The former fine lady would not have been recognised in the hard-working, plainly-dressed woman,

who was to be seen, ere a month had elapsed, actively employed in her daily duties in Mr. Hyde's humble dwelling.

The day but one after this eventful evening, two couples were married at Saint James's Church. They were Serjeant Scales and Mrs. Plumpton—Proddy and Mrs. Tipping. Both unions turned out happily, though Mrs. Proddy became a widow two years afterwards, her husband dying of apoplexy, about a week before the decease of his royal mistress. The serjeant was appointed superintendent of the gardens at Blenheim, and had a pretty cottage allotted him by his noble master, which was charmingly kept by his wife, who made him a most excellent and affectionate helpmate. And here they both passed many happy years, enlivened occasionally by a visit from Mrs. Proddy.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHEWING HOW THE GREATEST GENERAL OF HIS AGE WAS DRIVEN FROM HIS COUNTRY.

THE removal of the Duchess of Marlborough being effected, the tories next directed their machinations against the duke. Assailed with the grossest and most unjustifiable abuse; lampooned and libelled by petty scribblers; attacked in the most rancorous manner by Swift, Prior, and Saint-John; accused of fraud, avarice, extortion—of arrogance, cruelty, and ungovernable ambi-

tion, a sensible decline was effected in his popularity.

During his absence from England in 1711, these attacks were continued with unabating virulence ; his successes were decried ; his services depreciated ; his moral character calumniated ; his military skill questioned ; even his courage was disputed. Preparation was thus made for the final blow intended to be levelled against him on his return. Though despising these infamous attacks, Marlborough could not be insensible of the strong prejudice they created against him, and he complained to Oxford, who thus characteristically endeavoured to vindicate himself from any share in the libels. " I do assure your grace," he wrote, " that I abhor the practice, as mean and disingenuous. I have made it so familiar to myself, by some years' experience, that as

I know I am every week, if not every day, in some libel or other, so I would willingly compound that all the ill-natured scribblers should have licence to write ten times more against me, upon condition they would write against nobody else." Oxford was the more anxious to excuse himself, because, at this particular juncture, he wished to effect a coalition with Marlborough.

A charge was subsequently brought against the duke, which more deeply affected him. He was accused of receiving a large per centage from Sir Solomon Medina, the contractor for supplying the army with bread; and though he immediately exculpated himself by a letter, declaring that what he had received was "no more than what had been allowed as a perquisite to the general as commander-in-chief of the army in the Low Countries, even before the

revolution and since," yet still the charge was persisted in, and inquiries directed to be instituted.

By these means the public mind was prepared for Marlborough's downfal. On his return, at the latter end of the year, he experienced insults and indignities from the populace whose idol he had formerly been, while by the queen and her court he was treated with coldness and neglect.

On the opening of Parliament, in the debate upon the address, the Earl of Anglesea remarked, that "the country might have enjoyed the blessings of peace soon after the battle of Ramilies, if it had not been put off by some persons whose interest it was to prolong the war."

To this unjust aspersion, the Duke of Marlborough made a dignified and touching reply, which, as the queen herself was pre-

sent, though merely in the character of a private individual, had the greater weight.

"I can declare, with a good conscience," he said, "in the presence of her majesty, of this illustrious assembly, and of God himself, who is infinitely superior to all the powers of earth, and before whom, in the ordinary course of nature, I shall soon appear, to render an account of my actions, that I was very desirous of a safe, lasting, and honourable peace, and was always very far from prolonging the war for my own private advantage, as several libels and slanders have most falsely insinuated. My great age, and my numerous fatigues in war, make me ardently wish for the power to enjoy a quiet repose, in order to think of eternity. As to other matters, I had not the least inducement, on any account, to desire the continuance of war for my own

particular interest, since my services have been so generously rewarded by her majesty and her parliament."

The amendment on the address, moved by Lord Nottingham, and supported by Marlborough, being carried in the House of Lords, occasioned great alarm to the Tories, and rumours began to be raised that a new ministry was to be formed, of which Lord Somers was to be the head, and Walpole secretary of state. Mrs. Masham owned that the queen's sentiments were changed. Saint-John appeared disconcerted, and even Oxford could scarcely conceal his apprehensions. The Tory party was disunited, and the knowledge of this circumstance gave additional encouragement to the Whigs. Fresh advances were secretly made by the treasurer to the duke, but they were repelled like the first.

Finding that his salvation depended upon the most vigorous measures, Oxford bestirred himself zealously, and by his artful representations, frightened the queen from recalling the Whigs. He convinced her, that if they returned to office, she must necessarily reinstate the Duchess of Marlborough, and submit to the domination of a tyrannical woman, whose temper had been aggravated by the treatment she had experienced. The latter argument prevailed.

The storm being weathered, Marlborough's immediate disgrace was resolved upon. The commissioners of public accounts were ordered to examine the depositions of the bread contractor, Medina, and to lay their report before the house. In answer to these accusations, the duke published the letter to which allusion has been previously made, and which afforded a complete answer to the charge. Not-

withstanding this, and without waiting the result of the investigation, the queen, at the instance of Oxford, dismissed him from all his employments.

Thus, unheard and unconsidered, was the greatest general England had then ever possessed, dishonoured and degraded. His disgrace occasioned the liveliest satisfaction throughout France; and on hearing it, Louis the Fourteenth exclaimed, in a transport of joy, "The dismissal of Marlborough will do all we can desire." His minister, De Torcy, declared —"What we lose in Flanders, we shall gain in England;" and Frederick the Great of Prussia broke out indignantly, thus: "What! could not Blenheim, Ramilies, Oudenarde, nor Malplaquet, defend the name of that great man? nor even Victory itself shield him against envy and detraction? What part would England have acted without

that true hero? He supported and raised her; and would have exalted her to the pinnacle of greatness, but for those wretched female intrigues, of which France took advantage to occasion his disgrace. Louis the Fourteenth was lost, if Marlborough had retained his power two years more."

Such were the sentiments entertained by the different potentates of Europe. It is grievous, indeed, to think that so great a man should have been destroyed by faction. It is still more grievous, to think that some of the obloquy which the bitter and unprincipled writers of his own time endeavoured to fasten to his name, should still cling to it.

In the latter part of the same year, the duke voluntarily exiled himself from an ungrateful country. He embarked from Dover on the 28th November, and sailed to Ostend, where he was received with every demon-

stration of honour and respect. Proceeding to Aix-la-Chapelle, he afterwards retired to Maestricht, to await the duchess, who was not able to join him till the middle of February.

Marlborough never saw his royal mistress again. Apprised of her dangerous illness, at Ostend, he reached England the day of her decease. As he approached the capital, along the Dover road, he was met by Sir Charles Cox, at the head of two hundred mounted gentlemen, and on the way the cavalcade was increased by a long train of carriages. On entering the city, a company of volunteer grenadiers joined them, and firing a salute, headed the procession, raising a cry which found a thousand responses—"Long live King George! Long live the Duke of Marlborough!"

CHAPTER XVII.

QUEEN ANNE'S LAST EXERCISE OF POWER.

THE rivalry between Oxford and Saint-John ended in producing a decided rupture in the cabinet. While the treasurer endeavoured to sacrifice his colleague, by artfully misrepresenting his conduct to the queen, the secretary was enabled to counteract his designs, through the influence of Lady Masham, whose husband had been raised to the peerage with nine others, to strengthen the government, immediately

after the dismissal of the Duke of Marlborough.

Saint-John's successful negotiation of the peace of Utrecht rendering it impossible to withhold from him the distinction, he was created Viscount Bolingbroke, though he himself expected an earldom; but he was refused the Garter, on which he had set his heart, while Oxford took care to decorate himself with the order. Bolingbroke never forgave the slight, and from that moment utterly renounced his friend, and bent his whole faculties upon accomplishing his overthrow. He found a ready coadjutor in Lady Masham, who was equally indignant with the treasurer for having opposed the grant of a pension and other emoluments which the queen was anxious to bestow upon her. Thus aided, Bolingbroke soon gained a complete ascendancy over his

rival, and felt confidently assured of supplanting him in his post as soon as Anne's irresolution would allow her to dismiss him.

Oxford's fall, however, was long protracted, nor was it until his secret overtures to the Elector of Hanover, after the death of the Princess Sophia, had been made known to the queen, and that the court of Saint Germain had exposed his duplicity, and urged the necessity of his removal, that she consented to the measure. The Jacobite party, of whom Bolingbroke was the leader, had become paramount in importance during the latter part of Anne's reign; and as her dislike of the Hanoverian succession and her predilection for her brother the Chevalier de Saint George were well known, the most sanguine anticipations were entertained, that on her death the hereditary line of monarchy would be restored. That the period

was fast approaching when the question of succession to the throne would be solved, the rapidly-declining state of the queen's health boded, and little doubt existed in the minds of those who considered the temper and bias of the public mind, and were aware of the preponderating influence of the Hanoverian party, as to the way in which it would be determined. Still, to an ambitious spirit like that of Bolingbroke, the chance of aggrandisement offered by adherence to the fallen dynasty of the Stuarts, was sufficiently tempting to blind its possessor to every danger; and although aware of the terrible storm he should have to encounter, he fancied if he could once obtain the helm, he could steer the vessel of state into the wished-for haven. The moment, at length, apparently came, when it was to be submitted to his guidance. On the evening of Tuesday, the

27th July, 1714, Oxford received a sudden and peremptory intimation from the queen to resign the staff into her hands without a moment's delay; upon which, though it was getting late, he immediately repaired to the palace.

Ushered into the queen's presence, he found Lady Masham and Bolingbroke with her, and their triumphant looks increased his ill-dissembled rage and mortification. Anne looked ill and suffering. She had only just recovered from a severe inflammatory fever, attended with gout and ague, and had still dangerous symptoms about her. Her figure was enlarged and loose, her brow lowering, her features swollen and cadaverous, and her eyes heavy and injected with blood. She scarcely made an effort to maintain her dignity, but had the air of a confined invalid. On the table near her

stood a draught prescribed for her by her physician, Sir Richard Blackmore, of which she occasionally sipped.

Moved neither by the evident indisposition of the queen, nor by any feelings of gratitude or respect, Oxford advanced quickly towards her, and eyeing his opponents with a look of defiance, said, in an insolent tone, and with a slight inclination of the head—"Your majesty has commanded me to bring the staff.—I here deliver it to you."

And as he spoke, he placed it with some violence on the table.

"My lord!" exclaimed Anne, "this rudeness!"

"Lord Oxford has thrown off the mask," said Bolingbroke. "Your majesty sees him in his true colours."

"It shall not be my fault, Bolingbroke,"

replied Oxford, bitterly, "if her majesty—ay, and the whole nation—does not see *you* in your true colours—and they are black enough. And you, too, madam," he added to Lady Masham, "the world shall know what arts you have used."

"If I have practised any arts, my Lord Oxford, they have been of your teaching," rejoined Lady Masham. "You forget the instructions you gave me respecting the Duchess of Marlborough."

"No, viper! I do not," cried Oxford, his rage becoming ungovernable. "I do *not* forget that I found you a bedchamber-woman; I do *not* forget that I used you as an instrument to gain the queen's favour—a mere instrument—nothing more; I do *not* forget that I made you what you are; nor will I rest till I have left you as low as I found you."

"My lord! — my lord!" cried Anne. "This attack is most unmanly. "I pray you withdraw, if you cannot control yourself."

"Your pardon, if I venture to disobey you, madam," replied Oxford. "Having been sent for, I shall take leave to stay till I have unmasked your treacherous favourites. So good an opportunity may not speedily occur, and I shall not lose it."

"But I do not wish to hear the exposure, my lord," said Anne.

"I pray your majesty, let him speak," interposed Bolingbroke, haughtily.

"Take care of your head, Bolingbroke," cried Oxford; "though her majesty may sanction your correspondence with the courts of Saint Germain, her parliament will not."

"Your majesty can now judge of his baseness and malignity," said Bolingbroke,

with cold contempt, "knowing how he himself has duped your royal brother."

"I know it—I know it," replied Anne; "and I know how he has duped me, too. But no more of this, if you love me, Bolingbroke."

"Oh that your majesty would exert your spirit for one moment," said Lady Masham, "and drive him from your presence with the contempt he deserves."

"If your majesty will only authorize me, it shall be done," said Bolingbroke.

"Peace! peace! my lord, I implore of you," said Anne. "You all seem to disregard me."

"Your majesty perceives the esteem in which you are held by your *friends!*" said Oxford, sarcastically.

"You are all alike," cried the queen, faintly.

"What crime am I charged with?" demanded Oxford, addressing himself to the queen.

"I will tell you," replied Bolingbroke. "I charge you with double-dealing, with chicanery, with treachery, with falsehood to the queen, to me, and to the whole cabinet. I charge you with holding out hopes, on the one hand, to the Elector of Hanover, and to Prince James, on the other. I charge you with caballing with Marlborough—with appropriating the public monies——"

"These charges must be substantiated—must be answered, my lord," interrupted Oxford, approaching him, and touching his sword.

"They *shall* be substantiated, my lord," replied Bolingbroke, haughtily and contemptuously.

"Bolingbroke, you are a villain — a

dastardly villain!" cried Oxford, losing all patience, and striking him in the face with his glove.

"Ha!" exclaimed Bolingbroke, transported with fury, and partly drawing his sword.

"My lords!" exclaimed the queen, rising with dignity, "I command you to forbear. This scene will kill me—oh!" And she sank back exhausted.

"Your pardon, gracious madam," cried Bolingbroke, running up to her, and falling on his knees. "I have indeed forgotten myself."

"Oh! my head! my head!" cried Anne, pressing her hand to her temples. "My senses are deserting me."

"You have much to answer for, Bolingbroke," whispered Lady Masham; "she will not survive this shock."

"It was not my fault, but his," replied Bolingbroke, pointing to Oxford, who stood sullenly aloof in the middle of the room.

"Let Sir Richard Blackmore and Doctor Mead be summoned instantly," gasped the queen; "and bid the Duke of Shrewsbury and the lord chancellor instantly attend me —they are in the palace. The post of treasurer must be filled without delay. Lose not a moment."

And Lady Masham ran out to give the necessary instructions to the usher.

"Shrewsbury and the chancellor—what can she want with them?" muttered Bolingbroke, with a look of dismay.

Oxford, who had heard the order, and instantly divined what it portended, softly approached him, and touched his arm.

"You have lost the stake you have been playing for," he said, with a look of

triumphant malice. "I am now content."

Ere Bolingbroke could reply, Lady Masham returned with Sir Richard Blackmore, who chanced to be in the ante-room, and who instantly flew to the queen, over whose countenance a fearful change had come.

"Your majesty must be taken instantly to bed," said Blackmore.

"Not till I have seen the Dukes of Shrewsbury and Ormond," replied the queen, faintly. "Where are they?"

"I will go and bring them instantly," replied Blackmore; "not a moment is to be lost."

And as he was about to rush out of the room, Bolingbroke stopped him, and hastily asked, "Is there danger?"

"Imminent danger!" replied Blackmore. "The case is desperate. The queen cannot survive three days."

And he hurried away.

"Then all is lost!" cried Bolingbroke, striking his forehead.

And looking up, he saw Harley watching him with a malignant smile.

Lady Masham was assiduous in her attentions to her royal mistress; but the latter became momently worse, and continued to inquire anxiously for the Duke of Shrewsbury.

"Has your majesty no commands for Lord Bolingbroke?" inquired Lady Masham.

"None whatever," replied the queen, firmly.

At this juncture, Sir Richard Blackmore returned with the Duke of Shrewsbury, the lord chancellor, and some other attendants.

"Ah! you are come, my lords," cried Anne, greatly relieved. "I feared you would be too late. Sir Richard will have told you of my danger—nay, it is in vain

to hide it from me. I feel my end approaching. My lords, the office of treasurer is at this moment vacant; and if anything should happen to me, the safety of the kingdom may be endangered. My lord of Shrewsbury, you are already lord chamberlain and lord-lieutenant of Ireland; I have another post for you. Take this staff," she added, giving him the treasurer's wand, which lay upon the table, "and use it for the good of my people."

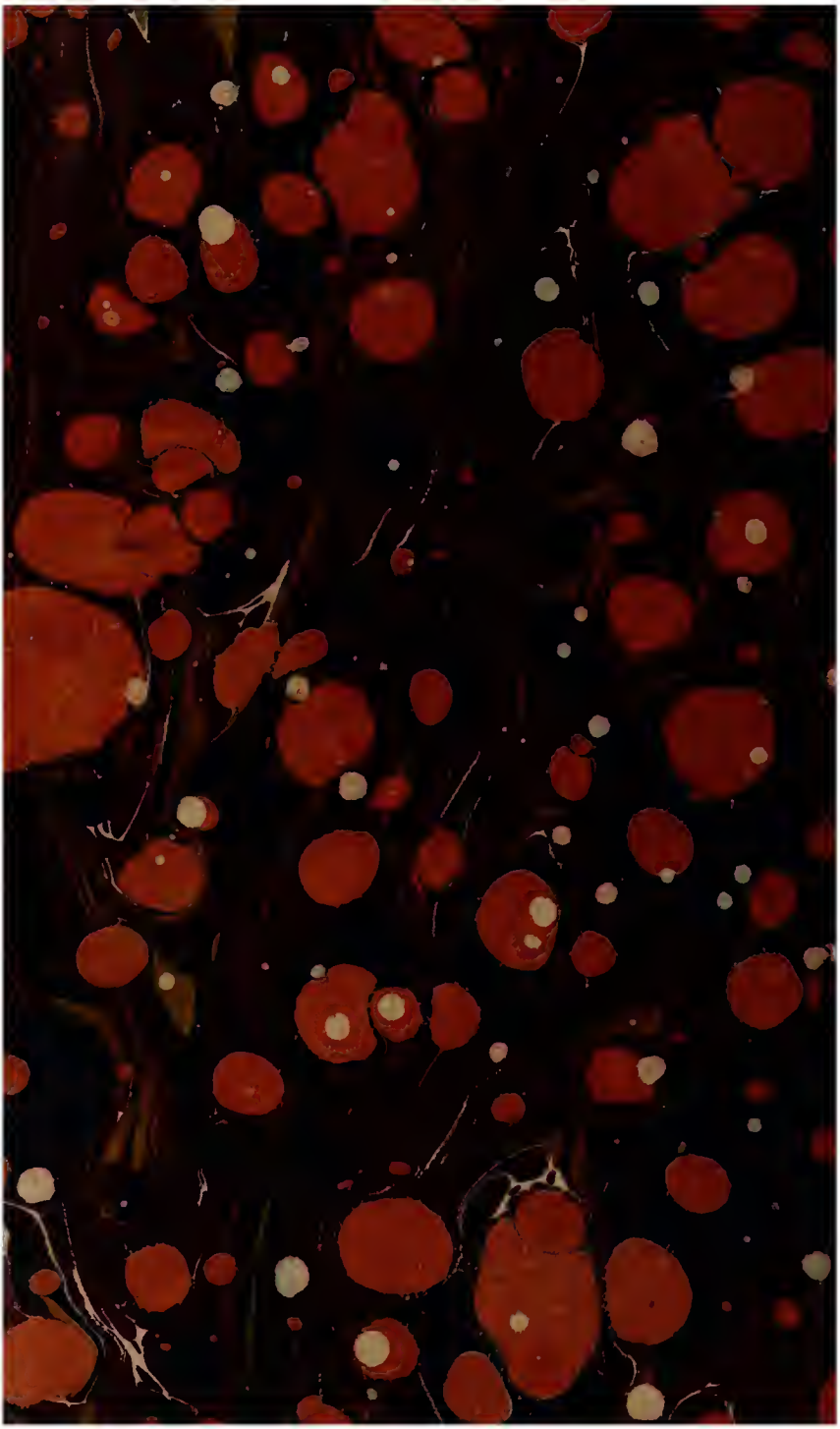
As the duke knelt to kiss her hand, he felt it grow cold in his touch. Anne had fainted, and was instantly removed by her attendants.

"So," cried Oxford, "if the queen's fears are realized, Lady Masham's reign is over; while your fate, Bolingbroke, is sealed. You have to choose between exile and the block."

"If I fly, you must fly with me," cried Bolingbroke.

"No, I shall wait," replied Oxford; "I have nothing to fear."

"So end the hopes of these ambitious men!" observed the Duke of Shrewsbury to the chancellor; "the queen found they were not to be trusted. Her people's welfare influenced the last exercise of power of GOOD QUEEN ANNE."

THE END.

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